14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

FOLK-LORE

A QUARTERLY REVIEW

OF

MYTH, TRADITION, INSTITUTION, & CUSTOM

BEING

THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE FOLK-LORE SOCIETY

And Incorporating THE ARCHÆOLOGICAL REVIEW *and*
THE FOLK-LORE JOURNAL

VOL. XXI.—1910

Altar et Idem

LONDON:

PUBLISHED FOR THE FOLK-LORE SOCIETY BY

DAVID NUTT, 57—59, LONG ACRE

1910

[LXVI.]

[Title page]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Plate XI.

101
102
794
103

ANCIENT PARISHES OF COUNTY CLARE.

To face p. 180.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare.

(With Plate XI.[1]).

131 63 County Clare from the fourth century of our era was united politically with North Munster, Tuath Mumhain, or Thomond, though separated from it by the broad waters of the Shannon. Standing thus by itself, "isolated by the Sea, the River, and the enmity of Connaught," it might be expected that it would preserve until modern times an unbroken tradition from the prehistoric past, and that a survey of its folklore would show many traces of ancient beliefs still surviving. The battle goddess *Catabodva*, 776 worshipped in antique Gaul, appears as the *Bodbh* of battle 787 (*cath*) in the wars fought by the Princes of Clare in 1014 and 1317, and the spirit that washed the bloodstained clothes and limbs of the then living combatants still, I was told three years ago, foretells calamity by washing clothes in the same waters.[2] *Ptists* or water snakes,—emblems, perhaps, of pagan islanders or devouring seas and lakes,—abound in the legends of a very early date, and are still reputed to seize the cattle, and even human 121 beings, drowned in the lakes of Clare. The place names considered below will show to what an extent our present nomen- 124 clature records the mythology and sagas of early days, and I propose in the remainder of this first paper to deal with the banshee, the death coach, and the fairies. The bulk of the traditions

[1] This plate of the Ancient Parishes of County Clare has been kindly lent by the Council of the Royal Irish Academy, and appears in their *Proceedings*, S. III., vol. iv.

[2] Cf. the *lavandières de nuit*, discussed by Sébillot, *Le Folk-lore de France*, Tome iii.

[p. 180]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

since 1790 has been collected from the mouths of the people, and not from books nor from the notes of others, and I have tried, where possible, to gather various versions of the legends without the dangerous aid of "leading questions."

I. *Place Names and Legends of Places.*

Were we assured of the date of their origin, place names would be our most authentic, and perhaps our earliest, evidence of traditional beliefs and superstitions, but their first records only give a minimum date. To take a few examples:—if we may accept explanations earlier than A.D. 800, the name of Iniscatha, traceable from about 550, embodies the name of a monster, (probably the "god or demon of the flood"), dispossessed by St. Senan, the missionary of the Corcavaskin district.[3] Again, Craganeevul near Killaloe recalls the belief in Aibhill, or Aibhinn, "the beautiful," the tutelary spirit of the ruling house of the Dalcassians, the later O'Briens. If the "Life of St. Maccreiche" be early, it bears out a later belief that the cave of Poulnabruckee, in Inchiquin, commemorates no ordinary badger, but the formidable "demon-badger," killer of cattle and men.[4]

Following certain topographical lines I give the names as they occur, rather than as grouped according to beliefs. I must also premise that the Dalcassian tribes virtually covered the eastern Baronies of Bunratty and Tulla, with part of Inchiquin, from about A.D. 377; the Corca Modruad, (the royal line of the mythical Queen Maeve and Fergus mac Roigh), were in Burren and Corcomroe from still earlier times, beyond the range of even historical tradition[5]; while a third great independent line, the Corca-

[3] Colgan, "Vita S. Senani," *Acta S.S. Hib.* (March 8).

[4] This I suspect to have been really a belated bear, as that formidable beast, whose bones so abound in Clare caverns, perished at an unknown date, leaving his name "Mathgamhan," or Mahon, to his human enemies, and his remains as his only monument. Certain MacMahons, however, affected to believe that they were Normans originally named Fitz Urse, in the same way as the MacNamaras were supposed to be Mortimers (*de Mortuo Mari*) by Spenser and others in the time of Elizabeth.

[5] An account of a curious episode found in the legend of St. Mochulla, whose "Life" had been lost or taken from Ireland before 1637, has been preserved orally until recent years (see *Bunratty infra*, p. 184). The legends of the

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

103 173 baiscinn, occupied the Baronies known down to Tudor times (and still as a rural deanery) as Corcavaskin,—now Moyarta and Clonderalaw, with the Barony of Ibrickan, (which takes its name from a settlement of fugitives from the Norman conquest in Leinster about 1180).

Burren.—Irghus or Eerish, a Firbolg in the oldest of Clare legends,[6] is commemorated by Caherdoonerish stone fort,[7] on Black Head. Finn MacCumhail gives his name to Seefin, on the same hills. The "silver bells" of Kilmoon church are said to be recalled by Cahercloggaun fort and Owenacluggan brook near Lisdoonvarna. In Kilcorney Parish we have two forts, Lisananima and Caherlisananima, named from ghosts; the first name is older than 1652. Beara, another Firbolg, brother of Irghus, gives his name, (found in a poem dating before 1014), to Finnavarra Point, —but not to Kinvarra, which is akin to Kenmare and Kinsale, "Head of the Sea" or "of the brine." The name Bohernamish, or "way of the dishes," with its legend of the miraculous rapine of King Guaire's Easter banquet, about A.D. 630, is found in the mediæval Life of St. Colman MacDuach.[8]

Corcomroe.—The reef of Kilstiffin, Kilstapheen, or Kilstuitheen has a legend of a sunken church and city, of which the golden domes appear once in seven years. The submerged forests and bogs inside the reef in Liscannor Bay, and the record of the great

Armada on the coast, heard by me down to 1878, have been since confirmed by the publication of long-forgotten letters. So historical tradition, even under the unfavourable conditions of recent centuries, has kept wonderfully accurate versions of events. The continuity of the schools and families of the hereditary bards and *ollamhs* favoured still greater accuracy in early times. Ireland had "books and philosophers" in the fourth century, according to Ethicus of Istria (*Social History of Ireland*, vol. i., p. 403), and, possibly for the same period before Christianity as the Armada lies behind our own time, history was handed down truly, at least in its broad outlines.

[6] "Legend of Carn chonaill," "Dindsenchas," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv. (1894), pp. 476-80.

[7] "Fort" in this paper means one of the entrenched residences, (usually circular,) of the early inhabitants. These are called in Irish *rath*, *lis*, and *dun*; the dry stone equivalent is *caher*.

[8] *Mish* also means an altar in early works. Cf. *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, (ed. W. Stokes).

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

earthquake and tidal wave that split into three Inis Fitæ[9] on the same coast (A.D. 799-802), incline one to believe in a basis for the legend. In Nonghaval is a fort called Liskeentha, from "fairy songs" heard there. Not far away, in Kilfenora Parish, we have a Boughil or "petrified boy," and in Carran Parish a Farbreag or "petrified man"; such names, originating in strangely-shaped rocks, are rather common. A third Firbolg brother, Daelach, gives his name to the little river Daelach and the townland Ballydeely. In Carran and Kilmanaheen the belief in the *phooka* or *púca*, a demon horse or goat, is stamped on the Poulaphucas, one of which has a fine dolmen; such monuments all over Ireland are found connected with the malignant prototype of Puck. Lisfarbegna-gommaun, "the fort of the little men (playing at) hurling," commemorates fairy sports.

Ibrickan.—Poulaphuca in Kilfarboy is, so far as I know, the only mythic name, but Doolough Lake (Nigricantis) is named in the early "Life of Senan"[10] as the prison of the fearful "Cata" of Iniscatha, while the "Legend of the sons of Thorailbh mac Stairn"[11] locates the cavern whence the ferocious "Faracat" launched itself on the heroes' spears, beside its waters. Dunbeg Bay is the scene of a curious merman story.[12]

Moyarta.—At Loop Head, the south-western extremity of the county, we find a Poulnapeiste and a line of forts,—Cahercrochain, Cahersaul, Dundahlin, and Cahernaheanmna,—connected with the monster killed by Dermod O'Duine and the brothers Crochaun, Sal, and Dahlin, whose sister ("the one (lone) woman") gave her title to the last fort.[13] Iniscatha commemorates its dragon, and Lisnarinka fort the "dances" of its fairy dwellers.

Clonderlaw.—Turning inland, up the Shannon and Fergus

[9] Now Inisicaeragh or Mutton Island, Illaunwattle, Inismatail, or Mattle Island, and Carrickaneelwar. The first two are named Inishereth and Inismatail in a charter of 1216.

[10] Colgan, *op. cit.* (March 8).

[11] A romance of about 1750, by Michael Comyn.

[12] Crofton Croker, *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, 1825, vol. ii., p. 31, (The Soul Cages).

[13] "Adventures of the sons of Thorailbh"; see also *Ordnance Survey Letters*, Co. Clare, Kilballyowen Parish, (MS., R.I. Academy).

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

103 173 confluence, Tobersheefra ("elf's well") and Poulaphuca are named from the fairies and *púca*, and Clondegad from two druids who competed in magic, making "two gads" (or withes) to sail up the stream.

Inchiquin.—Passing on to the settlements of the Dalcassians, we find treasure legends at Cloghanairgid ("rock of the silver (money)") and Skeaghvickencrowe ("MacEnchroe's bush"). Cloghaphuca in Kilnaboy and Poulnabruckee in Rath, with Toberatasha ("spectre's well," perhaps recording an apparition akin to that of Avenel), represent various supernatural beings. Seefin, Caherussheen, and Tirmicbrain near Corofin commemorate Finn, his son Oisin, and his dog Bran. The old pre-Norman Fenian tale of *Feis tighe chonain* is located on the high ridge over Inchiquin Lake, and connects Finn with the district and with a "hunting lodge" at Formoyle, but the first name ("seat of Finn") has been lost since 1839.[14] In the weird terraced hills of bare crag behind Kilnaboy legend meets us at every turn. Slievenaglasha, the Glasgeivnagh Hill, Mohernaglasha, Leabanaglasha, and Mohernagartan, "Smith's Fort," commemorate the Irish Vulcan, Lon mac Leefa (Liomhtha), and the wonderful "glaucous cow," the *Glas*, whose hoof prints mark the rocks in every direction. Inchiquin Lake has a beautiful swan-maiden tale,[15] but it "names no name." Still in Kilnaboy we find, near the tall brown peel tower of Ballyportry, a Cloughaphuca and the enchanted Lake of Shandangan.[16] Ruan Parish has Cahernanoorane, taking its name from "fairy melody." Lisheenvicknaheeha ("the little fort of the son of the night") seems ghostly, but the constituent is also an ancient personal name, Macnahaidche, in use down to at least 1084. In Dysert, Crush'banola and the basin stone near it are connected with a

[14] *I.e.* lost so far as I know. Many names supposed to be lost prove, however, still to exist, especially amongst old persons, but should never be asked for directly, as the demand usually creates the supply. This precaution is too little heeded by enquirers in Ireland.

[15] Given by Dr. George U. MacNamara in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxi., p. 212.

[16] Its curious and unusual changes of colour give it the reputation of enchantment.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

curious legend which I reserve. Banola or Manawla is really the historic Tola, living about A.D. 637. Drehidnavaddaroe Bridge may commemorate a ghostly "red dog," like the dogs of Cratloe and Ennistymon in this county, and the *Maelchu* of Kerry.

Islands.—This small district, although containing the "capital" of Thomond from about 1220, is of little note in names. Poulnaclug contains the hidden bells of Dromcliff Round Tower. Knocknabohilleen probably had a "Boughil" or "Farbreag" (see *Corcomroe supra*). Fairyhill Fort in Kilmaley, and Music Hill, are connected with the "good people." Knockananima near Clare Castle, though superficially a ghost name, is said to be *Cnoc* (or *Cnock an*) *na h iomdna* or "Hurling-field Hill."

Bunratty.—Taking the Upper and Lower Baronies together, both here and in Tulla, we find an oblique allusion to the fairies in Gortnamearacaun ("foxglove field"), called also "Thimbletown,"—the foxglove being the fairies' thimble. Caheraphuca has a fine dolmen and haunted fort. Knocknafearbreaga derives its name and legend from the "seven" (*recte* five) pillar stones, once the seven robbers who ill-treated St. Mochulla's tame bull. It is noteworthy that the life of St. Mochulleus, (sought for vainly by Colgan about 1637 and only recently found in Austria and published), gives the *seven* soldiers and the slaying of the tame bull that ran errands for the saint.[17] In the Lower Barony the fairies are connected with Lissnarinka ("fort of the dance") in Clonloghan, and perhaps Caherfirogue ("young man's fort," 1617), which is now forgotten. Moyeir, Moyross Parks, and Moyri are variants representing the ancient Magh Adhair, the settlement of another Firbolg chief and place of the inauguration of the kings of Thomond from at least A.D. 847 to Tudor times. Slieve suidhe an righ or Slieve oided an righ ("king's seat" or "king's death hill"), in Glennagross, was connected with a legend, probably historical, that King Criomthann died there in A.D. 377 poisoned by his sister, who drank before him to disarm his suspicion and secure the kingship for her son.[18]

Tulla.—In the mass of hills near the Shannon, Carrickeevul, Tobereevul, and Glennagalliach ("hag's glen") commemorate

[17] *Analecta Bollandiana*, xvii., p. 135.
[18] S. H. O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

103 banshees (see below). Knockaunamoughilly is named from a
173 "Boughil," and other "sham men" appear at the Farbreagas in Cloontra and Cloongaheen. Seefin in Kilseily is another "seat of Finn." Some names are more doubtful. Lough Graney, the river Graney, and Tomgraney, are attributed to a suspicious solar heroine, the lady "Gillagreine" or "Grainne of the bright cheeks."

II. *Banshees.*

173 Above the Shannon gorge, overlooking a beautiful mass of
176 mountains, the southern arm of Lough Derg, and the river and Killaloe with its weirs, rises the great brown and purple bluff
133 of Craglea. Above the low earthworks and mound of stones
[192] that mark the ninth-century fort of Prince Lachtna ascends a rough lane. Further up on the east flank a little well, Tobereevul, gushes out from under a low rock amid the ferns,[19] and on the west side,—up a lonely valley, a long-forgotten battlefield, "Crag Liath where shields were cleft," in one of Brian Boru's earlier combats with the Norsemen,—rises a high crag called Craganeevul. The names of both well and crag commemorate the tutelary spirit of the House of Cass, Aibhill or, more correctly, Aibhinn, "the lovely one," once, it may be, the goddess of the House.

175 On Good Friday, A.D. 1014, Brian, the aged monarch of all
176 Erin, knelt in his tent praying for victory, while the battle raged over the low ridge now crowded by the houses of northern Dublin and on to the weirs of Clontarf. News came that his brave son's standard had fallen, and his page entreated him to ride back to the camp. "Oh, God! thou boy," cried Brian, "retreat becomes us not, and I myself know that I shall not depart alive, for Aibhill of Crag Liath came to me last night, and she told me that I should be killed today."[20] How many centuries of faith lay behind the king's fatalism, who can say? As the Gauls worshipped another banshee, Catabodva,

[19] It still exists, though marked only "site of" in the new Ordnance Survey maps.

[20] *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (Ed. Dr. Todd, Rolls Series).

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

as their war-goddess,[21] so, before the baptism of King Cairthinn, (first Christian Prince of his House, about A.D. 430), the ancestors of the Dalcassians may have worshipped Aibhinn on her holy hill, and her equally lovely sister Aine, crowned with meadowsweet, on the tamer mound of Knockaney. Whether, if so, they found her already enthroned at Craglea on their conquest of the district, or whether the conqueror Lugad consecrated the mountains to his patroness, it is now impossible to guess. Aibhill, as banshee, held her own. We find her even usurping the place of the "Sybil" in a translation of the *Dies Iræ*,[22] in unwonted companionship with King David, and she was a commonplace of local threnodies during the eighteenth, and even the nineteenth, century. In the lake below Rathblamaic in Inchiquin she has down to recent years been seen, with the twenty-five other banshees of Clare that call her their queen, washing clothes before any impending disaster.[1]

The next appearance of a banshee in local history is of a very different spirit three centuries later. The *Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh* ("Triumphs of Torlough") was written probably about A.D. 1350 by Seean mac Craith, the hereditary historian.[23] It contains accounts of three spirit women,—one, the "Sovereignty of Erin," being of surpassing loveliness, and the two others, (if not the same,—"Dismal" and "Water Dismal"), of loathsome hideousness. The hags, however, probably survive, while the "Sovereignty" has perished. Bronach ("the sorrowful or dismal one") of Ceann Boirne was known as the "Hag of Black Head" from the modern name of the older Ceann (or Rinn) of Burren. She was in full repute in 1839, and I have heard of her vaguely about 1885 or 1887. In August, 1317, she

[21] Cf. *Revue Archéologique*, N.S., vol. xviii. (1868), p. 1; Sir Samuel Ferguson's paper, from the Irish point of view, in *Dublin University Magazine*, Oct. 1834, p. 463; W. M. Hennessy, "The War Goddess of the Ancient Irish," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. x., p. 425.

[22] Mss., Royal Irish Academy, 23.M.47.

[23] As yet only in manuscript,—one copy of A.D. 1509, and another probably from one of 1449. For its age see *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxxii., p. 139.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

175
776
763

was able to appear in "the dark before sunrise" and foretell destruction by words and hideous action. The supporters of Prince Murchad O'Brien, (then absent in Dublin), under his brother Dermot invaded the territory of his rival Prince Donchad O'Brien. The latter got together an army, "even the man in a souterrain (*uamh*) of a fort" being summoned, and marched round the site of the modern village of Ballyvaughan, his foe having sheltered in Corcomroe Abbey, in a nook of the bare hills some miles to the north-west. Approaching Lough Rasga, (still known as Rask), "they looked on the shining mere, and there they saw the monstrous and distorted form of a lone, ancient hag, that stooped over the bright Lough shore. She was thatched with elf locks, foxy grey and rough like heather, matted and like long sea-wrack, a bossy, wrinkled, ulcerated brow, the hairs of her eyebrows like fish hooks; bleared, watery eyes peered with malignant fire between red inflamed lids; she had a great blue nose, flattened and wide, livid lips, and a stubbly beard."[24] The writer adds detail on detail (some 90 in all), many too disgusting to copy. The hag was washing human limbs and heads with gory weapons and clothes, till all the lake was defiled with blood, brains, and floating hair. Donchad at last spoke. "What is your name and race, and whose kin are those maltreated dead?" She replied,—"I am Bronach of Burren, of the Tuatha Dé Danann. This slaughter heap is of your army's heads; your own is in the middle." The angry men raised their javelins, but she rose on the wind, yelling more and more words of woe till she vanished. "Heed her not," said Donchad, "she is a friendly *Bodbh* of Clan Torlough" (his opponents). The army hurried on to the ridge of the Abbey, where Donchad and all his kindred, save one brother, were slain before evening.

Not to the Irish alone did the banshee foretell ruin. In May, 1318, Richard de Clare, leader of the Normans, was marching to what he supposed would be an easy victory over the O'Deas of Dysert. The English came to the "glittering, running water of fish-containing Fergus," when they saw a horrible beldam

[24] I have to thank Mr. Standish Hayes O'Grady for this and other extracts from the work, the translations in the library of the Royal Irish Academy being, (it is understood), very crude.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

washing armour and rich robes till the red gore churned and splashed through her hands.[35] Calling an Irish ally to question her, De Clare heard that "the armour and clothes were of the English, and few would escape immolation." "I am the Water Doleful One. I lodge in the green fairy mounds (*sidh*) of the land, but I am of the Tribes of Hell. Thither I invite you. Soon we shall be dwellers in one country." Next day De Clare, his son, and nearly all his English troops lay dead upon the fields near the ford of Dysert for miles over the country in their flight.

The belief of the early eleventh and fourteenth centuries is still extant, for local legend near Dysert tells how Aibhill and twenty-five banshees washed blood-stained clothes in Rath Lake before "Claraghmore" (De Clare) fell, and that they still do so when mischief is afoot.[36]

For nearly 300 years there is no other Clare banshee tale, till the famous one of 1642 in the *Memoires of Lady Fanshawe*, (published in 1665).[37] It is so well known that a brief abstract will suffice. Her Ladyship, staying with some of the O'Briens, was sleeping in a room, of which the window overhung water at some height, at a castle, perhaps Bunratty or Castle Lake. She was awakened by a horrible scream, and saw a girl outside the window. The apparition was pale, rather handsome, and with her reddish hair hanging dishevelled over her shoulders. After some time the unwelcome visitor vanished, with other ghastly shrieks. In the morning Lady Fanshawe, telling her tale, was told of the death of a relative of the family whose illness had been concealed from her. The spirit was that of the peasant wife of a former owner of the castle, drowned in the moat by her husband and of evil omen to his descendants.

The next story was told in my own family and, I understand, in that of the Ross Lewins. I have traced it to a daughter of Jane Ross Lewin, one of the girls who saw the banshee. It related to Jane's father, Harrison Ross Lewin of Fortfergus, who probably died in 1776, as his will, dated November, 1775, was proved in

[35] Another "washer of the ford" appears in "Da Choca's Hostel," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xxi. (1900), p. 157, and she is also a Bodbh.

[36] Told me by Prof. Brian O'Looney in 1890, and I have heard more recently of the existence of the belief.

[37] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 83-6.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

175 March, 1777; but I have hitherto been unable to verify the
763 circumstances or place of his death. Mr. Ross Lewin had gone
776 to Dublin on business, the journey at that time taking five days, and the several stages being Limerick, Nenagh, Mountrath, Kildare, and Dublin. In his absence the "young people" went to a friend's house for the evening. The road passed an old church (Kilchrist), which was unenclosed, standing in an open field. As the party returned under bright moonlight, they were startled by loud keening and wailing from the direction of the ruin. Coming in sight, all clearly saw a little old woman with long white hair and a black cloak running to and fro on the top of the side wall, clapping her hands and wailing. The young men, leaving the girls together on the road, sent some of their number to watch each end of the building, and the remainder entered and climbed up on the wall. The apparition vanished as they approached the church, and, after a careful search, could not be found. The party, thoroughly frightened, hurried home, and found their mother in even greater terror. She had been sitting in the window when a great raven flapped three times at the glass, and, while she told them, the bird again flew against the window. Some days later, news arrived from Dublin that Ross Lewin had died suddenly on the very evening of the apparition and omen.

763 It is curious that an English family, no matter how long settled
776 in Ireland, should have acquired the ministration of a banshee, but, besides the Ross Lewins, both the Stamers and the Westropps were so endowed in Clare.[28] The Westropps had also death warnings in the shape of a white owl and the headless coach. This bird last appeared, it is said, before a death in 1909, but it would be more convincing if it appeared at places where the white owl does *not* nest and fly out every night. The banshee has been conspicuously absent of late years, although on the death of my father, the

[28] Among families with banshees, Thomas Crofton Croker (*op. cit.*, ed. 1862, p. 115,) names old Englishry such as the Burkes, Rices, Husseys (the Norman, not the Gaelic, name), Trants, and Keatings. The FitzGeralds of Kerry and Limerick had also a banshee. Of the Clare families the Westropps came from Yorkshire, the Stamers from Essex, and the Lewins probably from Durham. Some banshees may have been acquired by marriage, for the three latter families were related to O'Briens, MacNamaras, and O'Gradys, to name only a part of their Celtic connections.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

763
776

late John Westropp, at Attyflin, in 1866, keening and weird lamentation, (probably of some of the country folk who held him in deep affection), were heard the same night by the servants and some of the family. When Mrs. Stamer died at Stamer Park, Ennis, in January, 1883, the banshee and death coach were also supposed to have been heard,—though far more satisfactory explanations of the noises were forthcoming. The popular belief in Clare is that each leading Irish race had a banshee, Eevul, the banshee of the royal O'Briens, ruling over twenty-five other banshees always attendant on her progresses. The stream from Caherminaun to Dough, (the Daelach), was called the "Banshee's Brook," and when, as sometimes happens after an unusually dry summer, the water gets red from iron scum, everyone is on the alert to hear the rustling flight of the banshee, (not apparently Eevul), and her attendants through the air. In the prevailing suspense someone generally succeeds, and then there is unrest and fear until a death removes the uncertainty. There are many other modern tales of banshees. Mr. Casey of Ruan heard a banshee cry at the death of his father. The late Dr. MacNamara of Corofin was similarly honoured; indeed, when his family lived at Ballymarkahan, near Quin, there were numerous "authentic instances" recorded. The Corofin banshees, however, did not lag behind the age by maintaining aristocratic prejudices, for one, at least, used to sit near the cross road leading to the workhouse and foretell the deaths of the poor inmates.[29]

The most recent visit of a banshee told to me was in 1905,[30] and is sadly tame when compared with the stories of MacCraith and Lady Fanshawe. Some scattered cottages form a sort of suburb to Newmarket-on-Fergus at a temporary lake (or *turlough*) called Lough Gaish. The inhabitants were greatly alarmed by the loud and ghastly wailing of some unknown being on several successive nights. Local panic spread, and few ventured out after dark. Had any tragedy happened, the reputation of the banshee would have rested on a rock of belief for another generation; but nothing occurred, and it is now doubted "whether it was a banshee at all, at all."

[29] Told to Dr. G. U. MacNamara at Caherminane and Corofin.
[30] By Mrs. and Miss Neville and Miss G. C. Stacpoole of Newmarket.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

III. *The Death Coach.*[31]

763 The "headless Coach" or "coach a bower" seems of far later
787 date than the banshee. Ghostly chariots such as that of Cuchulain figure in very early tales, but neither their appearance nor their sound foretold death.[32] In Clare, at sight or sound of the coach, all gates should be thrown open, and then it will not stop at the house to call for a member of the family, but only foretell the death of some relative at a distance.[33]

763 I collected five stories, three of well-defined character, and give them in order of time as the dates can be fixed. The first appearance, on the night before June 18th, 1806, was related to my three informants[34] most solemnly by their fathers and uncles. Two told it in a general and confused way, but varied from the story of the third, which I give, only by omissions. Ralph Westropp, of Attyflin and Lismehane,—the latter place is in Clare, but I never could learn where he died,—lay sick unto death. His sons in the late dusk waited on the steps for the arrival of the doctor. Suddenly they saw and heard a large coach drive into the paved court before the house. One of them stepped down to open the door, but the dark object rumbled past and drove down the long, straight avenue, which was fenced on both sides. Two of the watchers ran after it, hearing it ahead of them. The noise stopped, and they expected to find the coach at the gate. They ran full tilt against the bars, the gate being closed and locked. They called up the lodgekeeper, and he was found to have been asleep with the keys still beside him. The sick man died the next morning.

Lismehane, under its later name of Maryfort, afterwards became the residence of the O'Callaghan family, its present occupants. On the night of April 29th, 1821, two servants,—one of whom was "Matty Halloran" who died not long ago at an advanced

[31] Cf. "Irish Folklore from Cavan, Meath, Kerry, and Limerick," vol. xix., pp. 320-1; vol. x., p. 119.

[32] Is not the death coach, and not the Hellequin, the "hell waine" of Reginald Scot's list of spirits in *The discoverie of witchcraft*, Bk. vii., cap. xv.?

[33] Cf. Herefordshire belief about corpse candles.

[34] The late Capt. Ralph Westropp of Coolreagh (in 1879), and the late Mrs. Wilmé and Mrs. Pitcairn, whose fathers were present.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

763

age, and the other was a butler named Richard Burke,—were sitting up to receive a son of the family, Cornelius O'Callaghan, who had travelled for his health in vain and was returning home. Halloran, who told the tale with fearless faith and weary frequency, said that the heavy rumble of a coach roused them. Burke stood on the top of the long flight of steps with a lamp, and sent Halloran down to open the carriage door. He reached out his hand to do so, saw a skeleton looking out, gave one yell, and fell in a heap. When the badly-scared Burke picked him up, there was no sign or sound of any coach. A little later the invalid arrived, so exhausted that he died suddenly in the early morning. The present generation seems to have got the story from Halloran alone.

On the night of December 11th, 1876, a servant of the MacNamaras was going his rounds at Ennistymon, a beautiful spot in a wooded glen, with a broad stream falling in a series of cascades. In the dark he heard the rumbling of wheels on the back avenue, and, knowing from the hour and place that no "mortal vehicle" could be coming, concluded that it was the death coach and ran on, opening the gates before it. He had just time to open the third gate and throw himself on his face beside it, at the bank, before he "heard a coach go clanking past." It did not stop at the house, but passed on, and the sound died away. On the following day Admiral Sir Burton MacNamara died in London.[35]

A man living at Annaghneale was returning from Tulla late at night. As he reached the corner of Fortanne demesne he heard a heavy rumbling behind him, and horses trotting. Surprised after a time by its not coming nearer, he looked back and saw a large dark mass with a figure on the box. It came no closer to him, and in a fright he hurried on. At a bend in the road he ventured to stand at the fence and look again. This time he saw the horses and carriage drive over the wall and ditch into Fortanne. He fell, nearly insensible with terror, but, hearing and seeing nothing more, hurried home. This was told to a steward at Maryfort about twenty years ago, and happened "long after the sale of Fortanne" to its present owner in 1879. The present tradition

[35] From Mr. R. Twigge, F.S.A., whose wife is a daughter of the House of Ennistymon.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

763 of Fortanne says that the coach was heard at the deaths of certain Westropps after 1873, but nothing happened after its last appearance.

The phantom of a coach and horse was seen not far from Corofin, at Cragmoher, not long since, but it is agreed that no death took place after the apparition. An equally vague story was told about 1870 at Attyflin by a very old woman, Norry Halloran, whom the sound of the coach pursued one dark evening for a long way, but it did not pass her door, and nothing happened afterwards.

IV. *Fairies and Fairy Forts and Mounds.*

776 823 [538] MacCraith, in the *Triumphs of Torlough*, in describing the prognostics of the death of Prince Donchad early in the fourteenth century says that "lights shone on the fairy forts," and it has already been noted that the *sidhs* or fairy mounds were lodgings of appalling apparitions, like Bronach when not at her proper residence in the lower deep. The *Dindsenchas*,—that early encyclopædia invaluable for everything but the reliable account of the origin of place names which it purports to be,—describes how a lady dwelling in such a mound sprang out at her would-be lover in the form of a dragon.[36] Probably such beliefs, and the consequent fear of irate and deadly beings in earthworks, have helped until recent years to preserve the residential earthen "forts," although the ring walls were destroyed with but little scruple. Nevertheless the son of a farmer named Nihill told me in 1892 that, after some days wreckage and removal of the outer wall of the fine triple stone fort of Cahercalla, near Quin, his father was stricken with acute pain, and only recovered from his illness when the work was stopped,—whence this interesting ruin has been preserved to the present day. A certain landlord, still living, nearly lost the use of one eye from the dust of an explosion when blasting a rock in an earth fort which was being removed, and this incident has upheld the faith and fear of the fairies in north-eastern Clare. A locally famous "astronomer" and weather prophet tried, many years ago, to blast a dolmen in Inchiquin Barony, and a splinter hit his hand, which was badly injured and

[36] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv., p. 441.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

afterwards festered. The wreckage of the dolmen was lying untouched on the ground a few years ago. The collapse of a calf shed on its occupants followed the demolition of Templenaraha oratory for building the unstable structure;[37] this might be ascribed to a more sacred anger than that of the fairies, but the oratory stood in a ring fort. Another case of supposed vengeance occurred near Lehinch on the Atlantic. Some workmen were employed to level the earthworks of Dooneeva,[38] a fort on a low cliff at the end of the bay and near the modern Protestant Church. The man who originated this outrage was digging at the mounds when he fell to all appearance dead. The news was at once taken to his wife, a reputed "wise woman," and she ran to a "fairy spot" and "did magic." She then went to her apparently lifeless husband, and ordered the fairies in a peremptory way to restore him at once and take his stick. Then, before everyone, the stick vanished, and the "dead man" sat up none the worse for his "rapture to the land of faëry."[39] The date of this event could not be fixed, but it seems to be attributed to the period before 1840, and Dooneeva seems to have been in its present condition in 1839.

Two forts named Lissardcarney and Ballyhee in Templemaley Parish were in 1839 reputed strongholds garrisoned by troops of fairies. The songs of the fairies were heard in Cahernanoorane in Inchiquin, and Leskeentha near Noughaval.[40] They danced in the Lisnarinkas, played "hurley" in Lisfearbegnagommaun, and laid in wait to worry the belated traveller in Rathfollane and a small fort near the rectory, to the south of it, near Newmarket-on-Fergus. Fairies haunted the well of Tobesheefra, while even at the holy well of the powerful and vengeful St. Mochulla at Fortanne milk was once offered to them. The butter had refused to "come," and the mistress of the house, (a Protestant woman of good birth and fair education), as she told me herself about 1878, took some of the refractory milk to the well, made the sign

[37] Told to Dr. G. U. MacNamara about 1907.

[38] *Not* Doonmeeve as on the Ordnance Survey maps.

[39] Told to Miss Diana Parkinson. I heard it locally, but more vaguely, in 1907.

[40] Local traditions, 1904, 1908.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

776 823 [789] of the cross over it, said the Lord's Prayer, dug a hole in the mud at the well with her left heel, and went away without looking back. As might have been expected, the butter had "come" by the time she had got home again, and she used to quote the case as "proof positive." Besides the forts and wells, the dolmens are believed to have been fairy homes, but in my enquiries since 776 1892 I have never been able to authenticate a case of offerings 782 at them of milk and butter, although small basins like the Swedish 823 "elf mills" are found in the covers of more than one of these structures, and large *bullauns* or basins at others, such as Ballyganner Hill near Noughaval, Cappaghkennedy on the hills above Corofin, and Newgrove and Kiltanon near Tulla in eastern Clare. Food and drink, however, have been, until at least the present century, set out in plates and cups in Inchiquin and Moyarta Baronies, and in the latter, on the Shannon bank, the slops were thrown out and clean plates, water, chairs, and a well-swept hearth left by a punctilious servant for fairy guests in 1888 or 1889.

776 823 The greatest fairy monarch in Clare was "Donn of the Sandhills" (now the golf links), near the old castle of Doogh, (*i.e.* Dumhach or Sand Dune), near Lehinch. He, or one of the other fairy princes named Donn, appears in a list of the divine race of the Tuatha Dé Danann,[41] and is therefore of the family of the Dagda, and, it may be presumed, a lineal descendant of the ancient Ana, Mother of the Gods. A well-known Irish scholar and antiquary, Andrew MacCurtin, before 1730 addressed a political petition to Donn of Dumhach complaining, like most Irish antiquaries, of the neglect of the gentry, and praying for any menial post at his Court.[42] As there was none that answered, the petitioner had to rest content with the hospitality of the MacDonnells of Kilkee and the O'Briens of Ennistymon. Donn's heartless conduct met poetic justice, for he has ever since "lacked a sacred bard," and, save for a slight uneasiness in a few poor old people passing across the sandhills after the golfers have left and the sun has set, he is now all but forgotten. In another poem of MacCurtin's, on a monk's horse "overlooked" and killed by the evil eye, or by the look of a red-haired woman, or

[41] *Cath Finntraga* (ed. Kuno Meyer), p. 15.

[42] Mss. Royal Irish Academy, 23. M. 47.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

by "the stroke of a fairy," the poet recommends the holy man to get the aid of a local practitioner of renown, Peter the Fairy Killer.[43]

776
823

In recent years I have met only one sign of true respect for the "Sheevra" race. A small patch of land was left untilled in the midst of a cornfield at the end of the steep descent from Carran old church to Eanty in the Burren. It was left for three years amidst the tillage, and then the field was allowed to return to grass. The owners obviously disliked to explain the matter, but the act was clearly understood in the neighbourhood as a concession to the spirits of the field when the grass land was broken up for the first time in human memory.[44]

The appearances of the fairies also seem now very rare indeed. At Newmarket-on-Fergus, a centre of much folklore, we find that, besides the two forts named above and a low earth mound (perhaps sepulchral), only one spot has been honoured by an actual apparition in the last ten years. In this case a man walking on the Ennis road, not far from Lough Gaish, saw a very little man neatly dressed in green and walking on the path. Suspecting the green man to be a *leprechaun*,—and hence an owner of gold,—the Clare man tried to grasp him, but the sprite vanished out of his hands.[45]

The "literary movement" will probably affect the folklore very soon, as it is already affecting historical tradition,—which is shown by the variations in certain legends collected at long intervals at the same sites. By some the Danann have been identified with the Danes as "fort builders." If this were so, why did Dane's fort become Caher Loghlanach, (Caher Loglin, 1652), and similar forms? The people once knew better, for forts were attributed to all sorts of times and races, not only to members of the Tuatha Dé Danann, but also to Firbolgs and mythical persons such as Aenghus, Eerish, Eir, Farvagh, and

776
538

[43] *Ibid.* 23. K. 10.

[44] It was certainly not the darker belief that in Scotland dedicated an offering to the one called euphemistically "The Goodman," nor like the sheaf sometimes dedicated to Brigit and other saints in West Munster, or, indeed, in other parts of Ireland.

[45] Collected by Miss Katherine Neville. The sprite was, of course, proved not to be a *leprechaun*, as that being can be held by the eye alone.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Croaghan, and Celts such as Lachtna (A.D. 820-840), and Brian Boru (A.D. 980-1014). In one notable instance, King Conor (A.D. 1242-69) is the reputed builder of the great stone fort of Dun Conor in Aran, which in the eleventh-century legend is evidently connected with Conchiurn or Conchraed the Firbolg,—a relation accepted in 1685 by Roderic O'Flaherty, although he called its hero "Conquevar" (*i.e.* Chonchobhar or Conor). Any modern allusion to the Danann is therefore "suspect." Many visits to the recesses of the hills in Burren from 1878 onwards,—and I may add that the same is true of the rest of Clare,—only gave me, in 1905, one direct reference to the Danann.[48] At the natural moat crowned by the small stone ring wall of Croaghateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna, we were told to cross ourselves as a protection against the Danann. The place was, nevertheless, undoubtedly regarded by the older people living near it as a most dangerous fairy fort, and we were told how certain badger hunters,—(who brought drink with them), —after a long festival on its summit got benighted there; they eventually returned home sobered by fright, as they suddenly "saw the whole fleet" of "them" coming up the mound, and escaped only just in time.

The "whirlwinds" along dusty roads and sudden gusts were not long ago everywhere supposed to be caused by the progress of fairy beings. The older folk believed, and trembled,—crossing themselves, or saying a word of prayer,—while the younger folk, more than half in jest, raised their hats, as is still sometimes done to the unlucky "single magpie" and the weasel.

I know of two cases of reputed changelings. My second sister, whose delicacy, when an infant, excited remark, was, about 1842, taken out by a servant to be exposed on a shovel on the doorstep at Carnelly. The angry and hasty intervention of another servant saved the child, but the would-be "exposer" was convinced of the propriety of her attempt "to get back the real child" from the fairies. A very old woman, Kate (Geerin) Molony, a henwife at Maryfort, near Tulla, whom I faintly remember in 1869, was many years before anxious about her little daughter's failing health, and went to a "wise woman," who assured her that the child was "changed." She spoke of this on her return, and unfortunately

[48] Apart from Lon, at Slievnaglasha, and the "hags."

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

the patient was old enough to understand the fearful decision. 776
The poor child turned over on the bed with a groan, and was a little later found to be dead.

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

(*To be continued.*)

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued*).

175
538

In a preceding article I have dealt with place names and legends of names, banshees, the death coach, and fairies, and in the present one I propose to deal mainly with other appearances of a spectral or spiritual character. In doing this it is necessary carefully to avoid attributing to older writers beliefs which they never held. It is more than probable that the writer of the *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, and Seean MacCraith, the author of the *Triumphs of Torlough*, were no more under a delusion when they personified the spirits of Valour, Bloodshed, Terror, and Sovereignty than the modern journalist who writes of "Public Opinion sitting in judgment," or the "Spirit of Loyalty attending King George." The first ancient writer, describing the terrors of the deadly combat of the Irish and the Norse in 1014, tells us that there was "a bird of valour and championship fluttering over Murchad's head and flying on his breath." He also tells how there flew a dark, merciless, (and many more adjective-endowed) *bodbh*, screaming and fluttering over the combatants, while "the satyrs (*bannanaig*), the idiots, the maniacs of the glens, the witches, the goblins, the ancient birds, the destroying demons of the air and sky, and the feeble demonic phantom host" arose to accompany the warriors in the combat. He probably meant little more than "Amazement in the van and Flight combined with Sorrow's faded form and Solitude behind," though possibly the various uncanny "creatures of the wild" were real to him in their proper places in the hills and glens, but not in daylight on the fields beside Dublin. The second writer (*circa*

[p.209]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

1350) describes King Torlough, about 1286, returning from a successful raid, which has left its mark very clearly on the legal rolls of the day, ravaging the English lands round the mountains of eastern County Limerick and northern Tipperary, and marching up the western (Clare) shore of Lough Derg. A lovely maiden appeared, "modest, strange in aspect, glorious in form, rosy-lipped, soft-taper-handed, pliant-wavy-haired, white-bosomed." She was the "Sovereignty of Erin" come to rebuke the chief for letting De Burgh dissuade him from attempting the reconquest of all Ireland, and vanished in a lustrous cloud. The author's intent here is unmistakable. MacCraith has one other passage, so suggestive and remarkable that it can only be regarded as a literal statement of the beliefs of the warriors at the burial of some of whom his father, Ruadri, presided, a few years later, in 1317. Donchad, a prince of the Clan Torlough line, aided by William de Burgh, gave his deadly enemy, Richard de Clare, a severe defeat near Bunratty in 1311. At the moment of victory De Burgh was captured by the foe, and the victors fled in indescribable confusion,—the English to their nearest castles, and the Irish to their stone strongholds, the great terraced mountains of Burren. De Clare and his protegé, Prince Dermot, camped on two ridges at Cruchwill and Tullycommaun, a long ridge capped with tumuli, dolmens, and "forts." Donchad lay across the valley and lake on the spurs of Slieve Carran opposite. The soldiers of Donchad, we are told, "were disturbed by phantoms and delusive dreams, lights shone on the fairy forts," the waves of Erin[1] groaned, "the deep plaint resounded from the woods and streams," shades were seen, and hollow groans were heard. This is evidently a true tale of the reminiscences of the depressed and anxious men who lay looking at the foes' camp fires opposite. I have often heard with wonder on these lonely hills

> "undescribed sounds
> That come a swooning over hollow grounds
> And wither drearily on barren moors,"

the noise of the winds in the rocks and bushes, the strange prattle of streams in crannies deep down in the rocks, the cry of night

[1] Misfortune was foretold by great waves at four spots on the Irish coast, to which later belief added a fifth at Malbay in Clare.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

birds, the whisper and rustle of the wind on the grass and heather, and those weird sounds, booming and sobbing out of nowhere, which are supposed to arise from underground streams and caverns.

V. *Will-o-the-wisps and Corpse-lights.*

103 821 The will-o-the-wisp, if not unknown, is at least extremely rare. The name Loughaunaguinnell, or Loughaguinnell, of a pool in Doora refers, I was told, to a "candle" floating over its surface. In the name Doora itself we find the ancient word for water, which occurs as the river Dour in Kerry in Ptolemy's Atlas in the first century. Mr. and Mrs. Hall, in *Ireland: its Scenery, Character, etc.* (1841), note that one of their guides told them of "corpse candles" seen on the banks of the Shannon, and voices of the "good people" heard with them. Crofton Croker, in "Florry Cantillon's Funeral,"[2] alludes to the "Blue Man's Lake at midnight," a lonely place in the bog at Shragh, near Kilrush, where "a spectral figure enveloped in a bluish flame" haunted the melancholy waters. Some of the "corpse lights" shining in graveyards, "forts," and deserted buildings I have myself seen. In one case, I traced the light to the stagnant water, full of rotten leaves, in the fosse of a "fort," which, when stirred by waving branches, gave out phosphorescent light. In another case a church gable was observed for many nights lit up with blue flame, after three victims of a railway accident had been laid in their family vault below it. The windows of Inchiquin Castle are seen across the lake, lit up by pale blue fire, which vanishes from the sight of anyone approaching the ruined building though still visible at a distance. A deserted cottage on a ridge not far from Tulla, as I have seen, used to be lit up with pale light, and was reputed haunted. Several graveyards have displayed "corpse lights," and particularly those at Killone Convent (a picturesque twelfth-century ruin on a wooded slope over a beautiful lake near Ennis), and, I hear, Killeemur and Kilmaleery on the Shannon and Fergus, and Clooney in Bunratty Barony.

[2] *Fairy Legends of the South of Ireland*, Part II. (1828), p. 24.

[p.202]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Plate XIV.

531
764

Rath-Blathmaic. "Broc-sidh" and "Sheelah".

"Peists"
Dysert-O'Dea

1910 "Ghost Stone". Clonlara. JFW

[facing p. 202]

~~To face p. 340~~

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

VI. *Underground Folk.*

To underground folk, other than fairies, I have only found few and uninteresting references, such as,—"an old woman looked out of the side of the fort, and the man ran away"; "he heard *them* talking inside the hill"; and "the little old man came out of the fort, and shut it behind him." 776

VII. *Water Spirits and Mer-folk.*

The Shannon, according to the *Dindsenchas*, derived its name from a sea-lady, but evidently not a "water-breather." Sinenn, daughter of Lodan, came from *Tir-tairngire*, the Land of Youth, under the sea, to visit the well of Connla, under the river now called Shannon. She came to Linn na feile, but was drowned at Tarrchinn "on this side Shannon," and gave her name to the great river.[3] A water spirit, or mermaid, is remembered at Killone Lake and Newhall. The legend is preserved in several variants. In 1839 it was told how O'Brien of Killone saw a lovely girl in the lake, and caught her. Bringing her home, he found to his great disgust and disappointment that she had a fish's tail. He ordered her to be kept in a "crib," and fed and well-treated. As she never spoke, a local fool threw scalding water on her to make her say something. He was only too successful, for, after a wild, blood-curdling shriek, she cried: 103 773 776

> "As the return of the salmon from the stream,
> A return without blood or flesh,
> May such be the departure of the O'Briens
> Like ears of wild corn from Killone."[4]

The legend recorded, almost at the same time (1840), by Crofton Croker was told to me by the old peasantry, about 1876, as follows:—A mermaid used to swim up a stream that flowed under the cellars of Newhall, in order to steal wine. The "master" (an O'Brien), or the butler, hid and stabbed her, (or threw her into a tub of scalding water where she became a big lump of jelly), and her blood ran down the stream and 773 776

[3] "The Dind Senchas," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv. (1894), p. 456.
[4] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. ii., p. 111.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

773 776 reddened all the lake. As the wounded being floated away she wailed :—

> "As the water maid floats weak and bloodless down the stream
> So the O'Briens shall go from Killone."

Prof. Brian O'Looney heard in his youth, and told me, a tale nearly identical :—

> "As the mermaid goes on the sea,
> A wretched victim devoid of flesh and blood,
> So shall the race of O'Brien pass away
> Till they leave Killone in wild weeds."

The lake, like the stream already noted at Caherminaun, turns red at times from iron scum and red clay after a dry summer. [823] This is supposed to be caused by the local Undine's blood, and to foretell a change of occupants in Newhall. Strange to say, I saw it happen last when the place was let by the MacDonnells to the O'Briens. The cellar at Newhall has its outer section roofed with large slabs, and the inner consists of long, low, cross vaults. [342] In the end of the innermost recess is a built-up square patch, which sounds hollow, and is said to show the opening closed to keep out the thievish mermaid. There seems no evidence of any stream running underneath the cellar, but local tradition tells of a vaulted passage down to the lake.

776 Sruhaunaglora (prattling brook), in Kilseily on the flank of the eastern hills, probably owes its name, as many brooks their [103] legend, to the supposed talking of water-folk. There was some belief in mer-folk at Kilkee before 1879, but it has nowadays got touched-up for tourists. Such touching-up, however, cannot have affected the ugly, drunken, stupid *merrow* Coomara (sea-dog), who kept the souls of drowned sailors in magic lobster-pots in his house under the sea, off Killard, as related by Crofton Croker.[1] The *merrow's* power of passing through the waves depended on a magic cap, and a duplicate of it enabled his human guest to visit him.

The last reported appearance of a mermaid is so recent as the end of April, 1910. Several people, including Martin Griffin, my informant, saw what they are firmly convinced was a mer-woman in a cove a little to the north of Spanish Point, near Miltown,

[1] *Op. cit.*, Part II. (1828), pp. 30-58 ("The Soul Cages").

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Malbay. She was white-skinned and had well-shaped white hands. The party tried to make friends with her, giving her bread, which she ate. Then a Quilty fisherman got frightened, said she was "something bad," and threw a pebble at her, on which she plunged into the sea and disappeared. Soon afterwards King Edward died. An old man at Spanish Point said the last mermaid was seen the year of the Great Famine (1846), and that such an appearance foretells a public disaster.

VIII. *Ghosts and Haunted Houses.*

Here, "where'er we tread is haunted," and libellous, ground, so that in the majority of cases the names and definite addresses must be withheld, although in every case I am acquainted with them.

Taking first the ancient buildings, I am unable to state the nature of the haunter of Lisananima (ghost fort) in Kilcorney, or of the other places of like name, although, as regards the former, Dr. George MacNamara and I did our best, about 1897, to find out, for the ghost was said to have been seen recently; so also at Toberatasha (spectre well). At Lisfuadnaheirka, near Kilkee, we were told in 1896 of a "horned ghost," but "Fuadnaheirka" was a local "terror by night" who slew people, as Eugene O'Curry says his bare legs knew when, (as a boy in 1816), he lived close to Dunaheirka (or Liscroneen), a large fort, which was the chief seat of this being, and was evidently a place to be run past on dark winter evenings.[6] It is not wonderful that stories should be so vague. A form "that shape has none" terrifies some nervous or drunken person, who afterwards speaks often of the ghost, but can give no details. The subject is usually regarded too seriously for verbal embroidery.

A fisherman, being detained on Scattery Island by a storm early last century, and hence unable to attend mass at Kilrush, went up into the "cathedral"[7] to pray. After a time he looked up and saw a crowd of monks and laity with priests at the altar in

[6] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol i., pp. 370 *et seq.*

[7] This is the Church of St. Mary near the Round Tower.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

775 gorgeous vestments. He shut his eyes in terror and prayed, and when he ventured to look again he saw only "the clouds flitting over the roofless church and the old ravens croaking and wheeling over their nests on the tower top."[8] At Stamer Park I was told, in 1873, that "a string of monks" used formerly to pass up the garden to the Abbey of Ennis, but, even then, it was only a vague tradition. A 'she-ghost' haunted the canal bridge of Clonlara, while it was being built in 1769, and was at last exorcised by a slab, still remaining, with her figure cut on it in low relief and the date (Plate XIV.). This figure closely resembles the grotesque (and usually indecent) carvings of prophylactic female figures called "hags of the castle," and now [532] *sheelanagigs* from a well-known carving in County Cork. Two undoubted examples of these figures remain in Clare, a much-defaced one above the door of Kilnaboy church, and a perfect one, struggling with two dragons, on the ornate, and possibly eleventh-century, sill at Rath-Blathmaic church.[9] The Clonlara figure, if older than 1769, may have been brought from one of the ruined towers of Rinroe, Newtown, and Aharinagh, not far away.

The back avenue near the castle of Teermicbrain or Adelphi was haunted, until 1885 at least, by a dark shadowy figure. A "grey man" haunted the lonely storm-beaten shell of Dunlicka Castle, on the cliffs near Kilkee, one of the wildest and most beautiful parts of that glorious coast. He tried to point out hidden treasure, but failed owing to the fears of the man who saw him, and who, when at last venturing back, could not remember the exact hiding-place. The disgusted treasure guardian has made no later attempt.[10] Doonmore, a shore castle farther north, was notorious for the ghastly sounds heard in its vaults, probably caused by waves lapping into rock crannies,

[8] Told by an old peasant of his grandfather, *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. viii. (1841), p. 548. The same person one moonlight night saw a dim figure making signs, and, following it, found his cow with her legs firmly fixed in a hole and in great danger.

[9] See Plate XIV. and the figures in *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxiv., pp. 27, 33.

[10] From two residents at Moveen in 1908.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

but imputed to the perturbed spirits of those who had perished miserably in the dungeons.[11] At Clare Castle, there used to be seen a ghost, said to be the wife of the first Colonel George Stamer of Carnelly (1680), who held the place under Lord Clare. Legend said that her infant had sprung from her arms through an open window into the river Fergus beneath. The mother went mad and died, and her ghost could be seen vainly searching for her lost child along the bank.[12] But in the records her place is occupied by a business-like lady who brought much land and money to her husband, survived him, and died, (evidently in full possession of her senses to the last), at a ripe old age with her children around her. At Carrigaholt Castle, on the Shannon, the ghosts of Lord Clare and his "yellow dragoons" could, I was told in 1875, be seen at military exercises in the castle field.[13] This seems now to be forgotten. Fortanne, or Rosslara Castle, near Tulla, and the old roadway south from it, were reputed to be "airy" (eery); the haunting beings whispered, laughed, and rustled in the hedges, and "things flew out." (I have often been there in the dusk, and, as in most lonely lanes on a hill-slope facing "the wild west wind," found the noises very weird and curious).

While, as we know, the country in darkness abounds with uncanny sounds, this is still more the case with old mansions. Such houses, with disused chimney flues and attics, ill-fitting casements, ivy and snails to tap on the windows, owls to flap and moan overhead, rats, shaking doors, and warped stairs to imitate footsteps, only need a legend and a few nervous inmates to become treasure-houses of ghost-lore.

One house on the verge of the Atlantic was haunted by a "breathing ghost," and had also a footstep passing with a faintly-clanking chain up and down a lobby. Our servant, after a couple of weeks in 1887, heard the first, and we heard the footsteps

[11] Alluded to by Crofton Croker in "Florry Cantillon's Funeral," *op. cit.*, Part II. (1828), p. 23. I heard it locally in 1892.

[12] So Mrs. Stamer in 1881.

[13] Their ghostly appearances riding through Moyarta, and their plunging into the Shannon, are alluded to in 1816. Cf. Mason, *Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., p. 430.

[P. 207]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

775 frequently. I finally located the latter in a dully-jarring sash which resounded in the flooring, the "chain" was a loose pump-handle, and both were actuated by the fairly regular recurrence of a prevailing sea-breeze in the stillest part of the night. A little inland, and not many miles from Lisdoonvarna, two rooms in an old family house are reputed haunted. The ghost of a faithless wife used to be seen getting out of the study window, just before dawn on the anniversary of her elopement. Loud noises, shaking the floor, were heard in the room overhead. The ghost of a legendary "Countess of Antrim," whose portrait was preserved there, haunted the hall and passages, and it was told that she had made away with her stepson in order that her own child might succeed. She was not visible, but revealed herself in a rustling of garments and turning of handles. A fragment of a poem on her crime is remembered :—

> "The blood on the cradle's the worst blood of all,
> For the young Lord of Antrim lies dead in the hall."[14]

Corofin has several haunted houses, both new and old, in and about it. One ghost haunted a house in the village for half a year, putting out candles and throwing sods of turf about at night. Near Moyhill, in the same district, a ghost was seen by a Mr. O'Neill coming through a ceiling; it used to put its hands on sleeping people, causing much alarm, but, like the preceding spectre, it lapsed into the Silence after a few months.[15] In a house near Ennis, a soft footstep hurried on some nights through several rooms, in one of which a cupboard used to open after the noise; this was not only seen and heard by the family and accustomed guests (like myself), but by new visitors unacquainted with the story.

It is not clear whether the beings that haunted two farmers' houses between Kilkee and Liscrona were ghosts or elves. The families began to "see things," and notably a little old man who used to sit on a sod of turf. This inoffensive haunting was more than the occupants could bear. One of them fitted up a cow-house as his dwelling-place, and the other actually built a new

[14] So Mrs. Twigge. [15] So Dr. G. U. MacNamara.

[P 208]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

house. The old residences are in ruins, and their desertion took place over sixteen years ago.[16]

It is to the credit of the people of Eastern Clare that it possesses hardly any haunted houses, but there are two of transcending interest.

The first lay near the Fergus. A footstep followed one at night on the upper stairs, and curtains were drawn round the old-fashioned beds,—if not by "a hand of bone," at least by a "thing that no man sees." On more than one occasion all the bed-clothes were lifted, "as if by four people," off a sleeper. Even the late Mr. Richard Stacpoole, a man of iron nerve, told how once on a visit this happened to him; indignant at what he supposed to be a foolish joke, he got up, locked the door, searched the room, and kept awake, only to find the action repeated twice; he struck a light at once, but no one was visible. Hands were laid on the doors and their handles. Anyone who "married into" the family or its connections was liable to have their hands kissed in the dark on their first visit. An invisible dog used to howl before deaths, being only heard from the room of the relation of the foredoomed person. A ghost, (said to be of no less a person than Maureen Rhue, the famous Amazonian O'Brien of 1640-50), used to pass up and down the long, straight avenue. Legend said that, after the murder of her twenty-fifth husband,—(only three husbands are known to history, which is also ignorant of their murders),—she was fastened into a hollow tree and starved to death. There were also the ghosts of two nuns,—for the place was said to have been a convent, without a particle of evidence,[17]—and, in 1838, a lady on horseback at a "Druid's Altar." (The last-named was probably a pure invention of the then owner.) There was, however, another ghostly object of which I heard from an eye-witness still living. A dark spot used to break out in the wall of a quaint old brick-floored room, with an inside window looking down into the kitchen. The legend was that an old nurse, a pensioner of the family about 1750, used to live in this room, and died, aged over 90, suddenly

[16] So Mrs. MacDonnell.

[17] Except that skeletons, and, it is said, crucifixes, were found in the garden just beside the house.

775 763 773 [P. 209]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

775 and mysteriously. One evening the kitchen-maid brought up some beer, and fancied she saw "a black shadow hanging over" the nurse. The latter was much alarmed at hearing this, and took her chair over to the inner window, where she could see into the kitchen. Next morning, when the girl brought up the breakfast, the beer stood untouched, and the old woman sat leaning back with a look of appalling horror on her face and with her hands resting on the table. The other servants ran up at the maid's shrieks and lifted the nurse, who was stone-dead, with a deep cut on the back of her head. There was a small patch of blood on the wall, and ever since it comes out as a dark spot on the wall about the anniversary of the nurse's mysterious death.[18]

The second house, now a dismantled ruin in a lonely valley in the eastern hills, had a far worse reputation. It brought misfortune on anyone who rented it, and a heavy doom lay on its actual owners; certainly, when my family rented it for the shooting, its reputation was maintained by the falling on us of a subsequent heavy trouble. Its most ghastly legend will be told later, and relates to a skeleton found buried under a peat rick in the yard, when the rick was removed owing to scarcity of peat; according to another version, told at Tulla, the rick was set on fire, and, when the white ashes blew away, the unconsumed skull of a murdered man remained.[19] One room was fastened up with iron clamps, tradition said, because its floor was soaked in ineffaceable blood. Another legend, (which I never heard locally or, indeed, in Eastern Clare at all), told how long ago a detachment of a Scottish regiment, quartered there, was poisoned by the owner. The drummer boy escaped the poison, but only to be brutally murdered as he tried to escape from the window. My informant (in the far west of the county), says that "the boy's ghost has been seen by many credible witnesses." There was some vague tale of a light on the lake, where dredging yielded a vast quantity of bones, said to be human and mainly of children, but I distrust profoundly the *dicta* of Clare people on comparative anatomy. The stories I give next were told me by

[18] So Mrs. O'Callaghan of Maryfort.
[19] So the late Mrs. Speight of Affock.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

775

at least six of my relatives, including my mother and two of my brothers. Those who stayed in the house rarely rested undisturbed, for whisperings and mutterings, footsteps down the passages, low sobbing, and strange shrieks and laughter were usual. Sometimes grimmer visitors came. My mother told how she and my father were awakened by the clang of a door and heavy footsteps. Someone then entered their room, though the door was afterwards found locked, and they both felt a horrible sense of some fearful presence in the darkness, seeing,—but unseen. After a few long minutes of suspense "It" passed back through the door and up the corridor, another door crashed to, and nothing more was heard. The clanging door was believed to be the one clamped up. My sisters also had a tale to tell. The curtains of their great bed had been carefully drawn and tucked in all round, but in the night my eldest sister awoke, and, feeling a gust of air and hearing a rustle, called to the others. She found the curtains drawn back, and all heard a horrible mocking laugh, but nothing was found in the room when the candle was lit. Noises and rustlings, with groans, sobs, and hurrying feet in the corridor, were heard for four nights. My brothers attested most of the noises, and I believe that most occupants of the place told similar tales.

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

(To be continued.)

[P. 211]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

A FOLKLORE SURVEY OF COUNTY CLARE (*continued*).

IX. *Supernatural Animals.*

776 There is a rich fauna of supernatural animals in the county, even snakes being represented in it. There can be little doubt that the highly imaginative early Irish personified the more terrifying powers of nature, such as the sea, the storm, and the thunder. The roaring, writhing waves in a sea creek or river swirl may have suggested some great creature, (too great to be natural), wallowing under the waters, and so given rise to the endless *péist* names and legends, in which a distinction is never drawn between the spectral and the natural.

[136] *Péists.*—Ireland, although free from serpents at all times known to science, was yet much dominated by them mentally. Probably no lake of any importance in Clare was untenanted by a serpent, a wonderful animal, or a city. A *péist* could, however, be chained or slain by a hero or saint, and the majority of the *péists* were believed to have been eliminated by such warriors in the same way as the bear and, later, the wolf were cleared away by ordinary mortals. *Péist* only meant beast, and seems to mean no more in many place-names not belonging to lakes or river pools. Cappanapeasta near Inchicronan need not imply a monster, but Poulnapeasta we may always venture to translate as "water dragon's lair." There are many examples in tradition of the "dweller in the waters," "the serpent-god of this hallowed stream." In the *Hunting of Sliabh Truim* we find a *péist* with "ears as large as the gate of a Cathair" (stone fort) and "tusks as big as a tree."[1] The saga of *Da Derga's Hostel* brings into one the Norse, Irish, and Hebrew beliefs of the *péist*, Midgard Snake, and Leviathan by its tale of the "Leuiçan, that surrounds the globe and strikes with its tail to overturn the world."[2] The *Feis tighe chonain* and *Hunting of Sliabh Truim* are full of allusions, and contain a dialogue with a Grecian *péist*, and tell how Finn slew spectres, arrachs, and aimids (women bugbears), and "banished from the raths (earth forts) each *péist*." Even in a nearly contemporary history of a hero of the time of Canute, a

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 5. [2] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xxi., p. 54.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Clare prince Murchad, son of King Brian, and, like his father, slain at the moment of victory in 1014, is described as "the second powerful Hercules who destroyed and exterminated *péists* and monsters."[3] It is interesting to note how the deserted forts, even in pre-Norman times,[4] were believed to be the haunt of strange monsters, and to afford an equivalent to "big game shooting" for the local warriors:

> "He slew the spectre of Drom Cliabh,
> And the spectre and serpent of Lough Ree.
> Fionn banished from the raths
> Each piast he went to meet.
> A serpent in the refulgent Shannon
> He slew by frequenting the "lake.""[5]

First in importance amongst the *péists* is the "Cata." St. Senan (about A.D. 500) found that this monster dwelt in Iniscatha, now Scattery, in the estuary of the Shannon, where Finn had killed a like infester. The Cata devoured the saint's smith, Narach, but Senan brought him forth again alive. The subsequent combat promised great things, but ended tamely. The Cata advanced "its eyes flashing flame, with fiery breath, spitting venom and opening its horrible jaws," but Senan made the sign of the cross, and the beast collapsed and was chained and thrown into Doolough near Mount Callan (the black lake, "Nigricantis aquae juxta montem Callain in Tuamonia").[6] In the oldest (metrical) Life of Senan, the *péist* appears as the "immanis bellua" or "bestia," while Iniscatha is rendered "Belluanam Insulam." The legend is alluded to even in the late eighth-century *Calendar of Oengus* under March 8th, "Senan of InisCathaig gibbetted Naroch's foe." The story is remembered widely, and among all

[3] *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (ed. Dr. Todd, Rolls Series), p. 187. This curious and bombastic panegyric proves statistically that the valour of Murchad was $\frac{1}{72\frac{1}{2}}$th part of that of Hector of Troy, who was seven times more valiant than the Tuatha Dé Danann god Lug-long-hand.

[4] The Normans held similar beliefs. Giraldus Cambrensis gives an account of spectral apparitions in a fort during the conquest of Leinster.

[5] *Transactions of the Ossianic Society*, vol. vi.; cf. vol. ii., p. 58.

[6] Prose Life of St. Senanus, Colgan, *Acta S. Hib.*, under March 8th, Section xxxviii. See also Wh. Stokes, *Lives of the Irish Saints from the Book of Lismore.*

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

776 classes at Scattery and along both banks of the river, at Kilkee, Kilmihil, and round Doolough and Miltown Malbay. In the fifteenth-century details of the "Cathedral" of Scattery a large-eyed dragon with crocodile jaws is conspicuous; there was another carving at Kilrush; and a third,—the "pattern-stone" removed from Scattery and until lately at Kilkee,—showed the Cata as "the amphibious beast of this blessed Isle," a nondescript creature with spiked back, scales, fish tail, nose curling up spirally, and clawed forefeet.

St. MacCreehy, a generation later than Senan (about 580), rivals the latter as a "dragon queller." He subdued the "Bruckee," a demon badger (*broc sidh*), at Rath Blathmaic near Inchiquin, which slew men and cattle and resisted the prayers of six local saints.[7] MacCreehy by his holiness soon overpowered and chained it; the aged saint then threw it

> "Deep in that forgotten mere
> Among the tumbled fragments of the hills"

below the hill of Scamhal (or Scool) where its den Poulnabruckee (Poll na broic sidhe) is still shown. As already suggested (p. 181) the Bruckee may have been a bear, and "a terrible bear,—he is death to a herd of cattle" in *Bricriu's Feast*[8] sounds like an allusion to a common occurrence. The Bruckee on "MacCreehy's tomb" in Kilmacreehy church, on the shore of Liscannor Bay, is exactly like the Cata carvings in Scattery, with long pointed ears, large eyes, and huge jaws blunt-ended, but bristling with pointed teeth. In the fifteenth century it had become a dragon in local belief.

Another Bruckee haunted Shandangan Lough near Corofin, a little pool famous, when I first knew it, for remarkable changes of colour. There are two funnel holes, eight to ten feet wide, full of water, in the soft ground near the pool which are still

[7] See Plate XIV., p. 340, *ante*. O'Curry, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, vol. iii., p. 322; *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxix., p. 249.

[8] P. 64 (ed. *Irish Texts Society*). However, if the animal was common in the literary period, one might expect that the Life of King David would have suggested an Irish counterpart to the monks. Fights with the wolf are practically absent from Irish tales, and it seems safer to regard the identity with the bear of the badger "as big as a cow" as a mere speculation.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

regarded with fear and suspicion. Ned Quin of Coad, a honest truthful man who died about eight years ago, firmly believed that he had seen the Bruckee in this lake. When he and a man named Pilkington were passing by, they saw a brown hairy monster swimming and plunging in the water, and it had eyes as large as turnips.[9] It was probably a "tussock" of peat and coarse grass that had, as often happens, fallen off the crumbling shore. There is no tradition that this pest was confined by the local sainted lady (Findclu) Inghean Baoith.

John Windele, amongst much speculation as to there being a dragon temple (*draconticum*) at Scattery and others at Loop Head in Clare and at Dun Farvagh in the Middle Isle of Aran, asserts, on the authority of *The Adventures of the Three Sons of Thorailbh*, a romance written in 1750, that several other formidable monsters belong to this district.[10] These were the Faracat,[11] Fearboc or Fearbach, and three other dragons, the spawn of the "all-devouring sow, on the rock of Cruine" reared by "the red demon of Doolough." Comyn, in the same romance, derives the name of Illaunmattle, an island off the neighbouring coast, from the Matal, a formidable beast, (perhaps a demon boar), defeated by the same heroes.[12] How far those of Comyn's stories without local attestation are genuine folklore is doubtful. Akin to these monsters is the mighty serpent hunted and slain by the O'Briens' army down the valley of the Daelach in Corcomroe. They stoned it with rocks which still form the great cairn of Carnconnachtach, near Ennistymon, over its remains.[13] This cairn, being at Ballydeely (Daelach's town *par excellence*), may have been the reputed tomb of the Firbolg chief Daelach, son of Umór, and is almost certainly the "Carn mic Tail" where the O'Conors of Corcamodruad inaugurated their chiefs.

[9] So Dr. G. U. MacNamara.

[10] Windele, *Topographical MS.* (Royal Irish Academy), p. 3; *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 350.

[11] *Ante*, p. 183.

[12] The Mata, a giant, many-legged, and carapaced monster, infested the Boyne valley, and left a pyramid of its bones in the cemetery of Brugh. See "Dindsenchas," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv. (1894), pp. 292, 329.

[13] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 309.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

776 These beliefs are obviously early, as in the "Agallamh" of *The Book of Lismore*[14] is a lough *péist* which kills men and hounds, and *The Book of Fenagh* tells of "Loc na pesti," where a hideous *péist* slew 900 youths as they bathed. The *Seanchus Mór* has a lake monster, the Murdris, which expands and contracts like a smith's bellows. The same idea takes shape in the reputed gigantic (if not supernatural) eels and pikes in certain lakes. An enormous pike haunts Gurteen Lough, an old property of the Stamers, in Lower Bunratty. The peasants dare not bathe in its waters, and believe they have seen in the dusk a huge misty form in the lough and even crawling up its shores, whence it has frequently carried off lambs, and even calves.[15]

Bulls.—In ruins and hollow trees sometimes a strong breeze from some particular point will cause a deep intermittent bellow, which might originate a belief in ghostly bulls. At Rosslara (Fortanemore) Castle near Tulla we have heard the wind from some undetermined point towards the north-west, when sufficiently strong, raise a roar so mighty as to be audible far from the ruin. I traced the noise to a small deep window nearly filled by a slope of earth and stones. The Castle enjoys the fame of being haunted, but I have heard no bull legend. At Rinroe (or Elmhill) Castle near Clonlara, the bull was seen about 1890 by the then owner of the farm on which the ivied tower stands. Having missed several "trams" of hay, the farmer was lying in wait in some bushes in the Castle field, and at last saw a huge black bull come out of the ruin, and throw its tail round a "tram" of hay and draw it into the castle.[16] There is an old lane way at a beautiful spot on the shore of Lough Derg opposite to the "Holy Island" of Iniscaltra with its lofty round tower and clustered churches with their noble setting of lake and mountains. In this old road are two dreaded spots, one haunted by a ghostly black bull with fiery eyes, and the other by a less awe-inspiring object "a ghost like a turkey cock"! Farther north is the scene of a curious variant of the Bishop Hatto legend, with frogs instead of rats and a brutal boy in place of a cruel prelate.[17]

[14] Translated by S. H. O'Grady in *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., pp. 101-265.
[15] So the late Ralph Hugh Westropp and Mrs. Stamer.
[16] The late Hugh Massy Westropp heard this from the farmer.
[17] So Capt. Hibbert.

[P. 216]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Water Cattle.—I have not found a water-bull legend clearly told in Clare, but cow's horns are seen over the waters of one lake and "something roared" under the waters of another.[18] In 1877 I heard of cattle coming out of some lake near Kilkishen, (perhaps Cullaun, with its enchanted city or palace), but I could not recover the story when searching twenty years later. "*Loch na bó girre* which is called *loch Gréine*" is given[19] as an old name for the large lake of Lough Graney in the Aughty mountains on the north border of Clare. This probably implies that it had a legend like that of Lough bo Girr, near Cahir in County Tipperary, whence an enormous long-horned cow used to issue.

Púcas and Horses.—Though the *púca* has influenced very often the place-names of Clare, its legends in the county are dry and vague. One man near Clonlara had the misfortune to become its sport. It took the form of a pony, and, finding the man searching for treasure in a gravel-pit, in which he had dreamed that gold was concealed, bore him away on a long rough ride and dropped him at the spot from which it started, where he was found bruised and insensible next morning.[20] The *púca* also appears as a hideous goat. I was told by a servant, about 1870, of a demon "black puck-goat with fiery eyes" appearing to a poor country woman on a roadside bank in the Cratloe hills.[21] The tale was very blood-curdling, but, doubtless to my relief then but regret now, I put it out of mind, and now forget its details. The *púca* always puts its hoof on the blackberries at Michaelmas, after which they become unfit to eat.[22]

Of spirit horses other than the *púca*, I have heard of one at a deep gravel quarry, near Trough in the same hills. The ghostly presentment of a Limerick gentleman, a Mr. Furnell, appeared one moonlight night on horseback. He rode at full gallop, with

[18] I think Lough Breeda, east from Tulla, and Clonlea Lake were intended. I am to blame for not making a note at the time, but was only interested in the legend. My notes only begin in 1878, though embodying earlier matter, and are too often "car notes" from drivers and others and not properly located. Where possible, I re-examined them from 1892 upwards.

[19] In the "Agallamh," *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 126.

[20] So the late Sir Hugh Dillon Massy at Doonass.

[21] So Mrs. O'Shea at Clonane, Limerick.

[22] Cf. similar English belief as regards the devil.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

hounds in full cry, and the sound of horns, across the upper field, leaped the fence, and disappeared into the quarry with a crash and groan. Mr. Francis Drew of Drewsborough, who was driving past with a friend, recognised and called to the ghostly rider; when he saw the supposed accident, he ran into the quarry, but could find nothing. Next day he heard of the death of the hunter, but far away from the quarry.[23]

Supernatural, but evidently material, were the horses which came out of the caves of Kilcorney in the heart of the Burren,[24] for they left descendants, noted for their high spirits and fierceness, by earthly mares in the valley. A similar tale of sea-horses coming out of Galway Bay was told some thirty-five years since, and we owned a reputed scion of their race, a cob from Connemara on the opposite side of the Bay.

Dogs.—One spectral dog haunts the road between Carrigaholt and Ross in the long peninsula of the Irrus, and is believed to be the spirit of a comparatively recent local celebrity, "Robin of Ross," of whom many tales are told. He was a member of the Keane family, and one version makes his ghost a different dog from the one near Carrigaholt.[25] Another dog accompanies a human ghost on its nightly patrol between the railway bridge and the cemetery at the venerable church and shattered round tower of Dromcliff. The precincts of Ennistymon House were haunted by the spectre of a large black hound, quite harmless.[26] Once very famous, but now nearly forgotten, was the ghostly "Black Dog of Cratloe." Many believed that they had seen the apparition, which used often to accompany the D'Esterre's coach and the mail car. My mother and my brother Ralph Hugh Westropp, who travelled through the great floods of the Shannon on February 1st, 1869, told a very circumstantial tale of the dog.[27]

[23] So the late Capt. Ralph Westropp, from Mr. Drew.

[24] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 236; cf. Gough, *Camden*, vol. iv., p. 366.

[25] So the MacDonnells and a driver named Russell. "Robin" lived in the early eighteenth century.

[26] So Mrs. Twigge.

[27] My mother in her diary notes,—"Drove home through several floods, the worst at Bunratty.... Saw the phantom dog at Cratloe."

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

I was present at its first telling, before they heard from our old servant, Mrs. Julia MacHugh, of the local belief. The tale, I have heard, was fully confirmed by their driver and a guide, a workman of the D'Esterres, who piloted them along a flooded and unfenced reach of the road a little to the east of Bunratty. A large, dark, shadowy dog seemed to run upon the moonlit water, first to one side and then to the other of the carriage, and was more than once lashed at by the driver. It disappeared near where the road ascends from the low marshy "corcasses" along the foot of the Cratloe hills. Julia MacHugh, a woman of wide local knowledge, at once "explained" the apparition and said that the omen was good if the dog ran alongside, but bad if he leaped at the carriage or horses. On one occasion he leaped at the mail car, and soon afterwards its driver was thrown off and killed on the spot. I recently learnt that a ghostly black dog haunts by night the lonely road above the old ruined house of Glenomera.

Seals.—The belief that seals are disguised human beings prevailed, I am told, in Clare forty years ago, at least along the Kilkee coast.[28] I never heard it myself from fisherfolk. A little further north, from Connemara up to Mayo, the Kinealys are reputed to be descended from a beautiful seal-woman. The belief is nearly universal, and is attached even to a few of the family in Clare.

Rabbits.—Early this year a clever intelligent man, near Ennis, went with a boy and a ferret to shoot rabbits from a fort. Three ran out and were shot at and missed. The man then called the boy to come at once, and ran off in great excitement and fear, saying that the rabbits were fairies. Some such belief must be widely spread, as Mrs. MacDonnell of Newhall told me that, when a girl, she took up a small and very tame white rabbit in the glen at Edenvale and immediately afterwards found that she had lost a ring. The people who helped in the search, and her father's gamekeeper, were convinced that the rabbit was a fairy and had taken the ring with it.

Birds.—I have read of an enchanted bird which was caught in the cave of Kilcorney and spoke with a human voice.[29] The

[28] So the late Hugh Massy Westropp.
[29] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 236.

776
[825]
[P. 219]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

776 ravens and owls connected with the Ross-Lewins, Westropps, and other families as death warnings have already been referred to (p. 190).

X. *Spectral Lands and Cities.*

773 Clare formed a part of the outmost fringe of the ancient world, and its people were deeply impressed with the mysteries and wonders of the Outer Ocean. The voyage of Maelduin tells of the son of a Clare man sailing out into "the great endless deep" and finding isles of surpassing beauty and wonder, and the "Hui Corra" in deep repentance sailed towards the setting sun from the creek at the northern bound of Clare "to meet the Lord on the sea."[30] St. Brendan, eager to seek out new islands, went for advice to St. Enda, a saint closely connected with Clare, (where Killeany bears his name), and its appanage, Aran. In the bay to the north of Clare William Ires, a native of Galway, became accustomed to the ocean which he crossed with Columbus, and it may be that his tales of Hy Brasil, of St. Brendan's Isle, and of the "thrice fifty distant Isles in the ocean to the west of us. Larger than Erin, twice is each of them, or thrice,"[31] encouraged the frightened sailors of the great Admiral to persevere a little longer.

[792]

Hy Brasil,[32] the Isle of the Blessed, is possibly a legacy from ancient paganism, which placed its Tirnan-oge, The Land of Youth, in the waves "on the west side down from Aran, where goes the sun to its couch."[33] The desire for the ageless, deathless land prevailed all up the western coast, and was strong in Kilkee in 1868-78, and perhaps even still. I myself saw the mirage several times in 1872 giving the perfect image of a shadowy island with wooded hills and tall towers springing into sight for a moment as the sun sank below the horizon. I have also heard from Kilkee fishermen legends, like that embodied in the verses of Gerald

[30] "Voyage of the Hui Corra," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xiv. (1893), p. 37; *Voyage of Bran*, (ed. Kuno Meyer), vol. i., p. 12; "Voyage of Maelduin," *Revue Celtique*, vol. ix. (1888), p. 45.

[31] *Voyage of Bran*, vol. i., p. 14.

[32] It is marked on a series of ancient maps from the fifteenth to the middle of the seventeenth centuries.

[33] *Gruilla an fhiaga*, (Irish Texts Society, vol. i.), p. 21.

[P.220]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Griffin, of men starting seaward to reach its fairy shores, and never returning. 773

Another magic island was Kilstuitheen, or Kilstuiffen, in Liscannor Bay. On the southern shore, in 1839, there was said to have been an ecclesiastical city swallowed up by the earthquake that split Innis Fitae into the present three islands,[84] which suggests derivation from O'Conor's then recent version of the various Irish Annals. On the northern shore the tradition was fuller. Kilstuitheen sank when its chieftain lost its golden key in battle, nor will it be restored until the key is recovered from its hiding place, some say, under the ogham-inscribed gravestone of "Conan" on Mount Callan. (When that place was dug out only bones and rusted iron were found.)[85] The island, with its golden-roofed palaces, churches, and towers, may at times be seen shining far below the waves, but once in seven years it rises above them, and those who see it then are said to die before its next appearance. The fishermen [731] [763]

> "point how high the billows roll above lost Kilsafeen,
> Its palaces and towers of pride
> All buried in the rushing tide
> And deep-sea waters green."[86]

Comyn, in *The Adventures of the Three Sons of Thorailbh* (1750), connects it with the raid of Crochaun, Dahlin, and Sal in the time of Finn and their defeat of Ruidin, Ceannir, and Stuithin. Legend near Lehinch places the battle at Bohercrochaun. A pretty legend in 1878 told how those rowing over the sunken island smell the flowers of its fields through the waters.[87]

[84] Annals of Ulster, Clonmacnoise, and the Four Masters; *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 304.

[85] *The Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, ser. ii., vol. i. (1872), pp. 269 *et seq.*

[86] *Monks of Kilcrea.*

[87] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., pp. 300-4, vol. ii., pp. 74, 99; *Handbook to Lisdoonvarna* (1896), p. 64; *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxx., p. 289; *Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, vol. iii., p. 197, where I have collected the materials at some length. Other sunken monasteries and churches are alleged at Monaster Letteragh, off the coast of Mayo, and the Cantillons' Church in Ballyheigue Bay in Kerry. I do not regard the story in the *Irish Penny Journal*, vol. i., p. 362, by J. Geraghty MacTeague, as anything but a work of fiction; it is very artificial,

[P. 221]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

773 Another sunken island off Loop Head is named by the Rev. John Graham and the Halls,[38] and called Kilstiffin or Kilstapheen. I heard no such tradition in Moyarta, but O'Curry alludes to it without contradiction, although he was a native and son of a veritable repertory of the local legends of the Irrus.[39] The towers and other edifices were visible at times under the waves, and its [821] inhabitants sometimes raised destructive storms over its site when all around was calm.

The large lake of Cullaun (Cullaunyheeda) near Tulla is reputed to cover a palace or a city. Tradition said that a chief, Sioda MacNamara, (probably the restorer of the beautiful "Abbey" of Quin in 1402), was carried into the depths by a [774] "water horse" which he had caught and trained. The rock off which his treacherous steed leaped was shown before 1870, and the chief was believed to be sleeping till "the last weird battle in the west," doomed to win Ireland her liberty and a glorious place amongst the nations. It seems likely that it was from the same lake that magic cattle issued, as I heard about Kilkishen, near it, in 1877. A local bard, Michael Hogan, refers to the lake in one of his poems,[40] but how far he embodies local legend I am unable to say. His light-hearted, if lawless, hero is surprised on coming to "Cullaun's fairy waters" to see a noble park instead of a lake. He hits his cow in surprise, and she leaps the fence. Following her he reaches the palace of an ancient chief, who entertains him and dismisses him with his marvellously fattened cow. He finds at the fair that he has been absent for a year under the waters of the lake.

"Thro' wild Cullane's embowering shades—
Beneath the silver starlight, sleeping,
He pass'd—the trees, with silent heads,
Upon his darken'd path hung weeping.

---

following other romances, and contradicting the genuine legends in several particulars.

[38] *Mason's Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., p. 490, collected by Rev. J. Graham from the Behanes, Landers, Conris, and Coonerties of Kilrush and Carrigaholt; Mr. and Mrs. S. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery etc.*, vol. ii., p. 436.

[39] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. ii.

[40] *Lays and Legends of Thomond*, pp. 13, 20.

[P 222]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

773

He turned to see the Lake's blue plain,
With all its emerald glories round it;
But there appear'd a grand demesne,
By towering elms and poplars bounded.

. . . . . .

He look'd behind—the scene was gone—
A thrill of wonder gather'd o'er him;
For, nothing save the blue Lake shone
With all its silver curls, before him."

There was another legend, but a very vague one, about a city submerged by a magic well under the beautiful lake of Inchiquin. The legend seems to have died out near Corofin. Another curious legend about Inchiquin lake was found by Dr. G. U. MacNamara, to the effect that the lake originated from an old woman piercing the earth with a spindle, when waters burst out and filled the valley.

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

(To be continued.)

FIFTY HAUSA FOLK-TALES (*continued*).

000

19. *The Hyæna and the Wrestling Match.* (B. G.)

This is about the Hyæna. She had a husband, a male hyæna.[1] So she arose and got a vessel to go to the stream. So she went and came to (the place where) games were being held (by) the Elephant, the Buffalo, the Hartebeeste, the Roan Antelope, the Gazelle, the Jerboa, the Hare, the Lizard, and the Water-lizard. They were having a game. Now the Elephant was the great one, the umpire. So she (Elephant) said,—"Now (in this) wrestling game whoever throws down another may eat the flesh of him whom he has beaten." Now, on the Hyæna's arrival, they said,—"Are you not coming to play?" She said,—"I am (playing) certainly." When she had put down

[1] "Kura" is nearly always employed for both sexes, but the word itself ending in "a" is feminine; only in story 28 is it made masculine. The male hyæna is larger than the female.

[P 223]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued from p.* 60).

XII. *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds.*

It is unlucky to see the new moon through glass; to throw dust or slops out of a house on New Year's Day, as you throw away with them all the good luck of the year; to throw dust or slops towards a neighbouring "fort";[1] to see one magpie, or a "weazel" (stoat), without saluting it by bowing or taking off your hat; to go out of a house where they are churning without "putting your hand to the churn," *i.e.* giving a few strokes with the churn "dash," so that you will not "take" the butter; and to take fire out of a house,—so that, if you light a pipe indoors, it should be smoked out before leaving. Iron and pins,—except crooked pins with the points towards you,—should be picked up, and the first thrown over the left shoulder. Rub your hand on wood if it itches or after a boastful speech or speaking too confidently of the future; in east Clare you touch wood twice, with the phrase, "Good word (*or* time) be it spoken," after an imprudent expression.[2] You should bow to the new moon. Turn your money for luck after seeing the new moon. On visiting a friend in a new house, you should give some present, however small. In east Clare some persons are careful to throw a hen or other fowl that has died of disease over the fence on to their neighbour's land, to remove the ill-luck from their own poultry.[3] Others will not wash eggs offered for sale, as it stops

[1] So Dr. Macnamara and others.
[2] "Scratch it in wood, and it will come good," says a rhyme.
[3] Practised near Tulla, and resulting in some cases in great ill-will.

777
[825]
[574]
[578]
[p. 224]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

777 the hens from laying more; this is held at least near Tulla and Sixmilebridge, but seems dying out near the former place.

XIII. *Omens, Dreams, and Divination.*

787 *Omens.*—It is an unlucky sign to meet "a stranger woman with red hair," or a hare, or a fox, when setting out in the morning. A poem by Andrew MacCurtin, as already noted,[4] condoles with Father MacDonnell, a Franciscan living in Corcomroe, for the loss of his horse, and suggests that the *garran* [562] fell a victim to the evil eye or to the look of a red-haired woman. A sign much feared in north-east Clare is the flying of a bat into one's face, which forebodes sickness. A robin, a stray cat, or [763] a cricket coming into a house is lucky, but some regard the last as a sign of death,—though this belief is rare and perhaps imported, for in Dublin "the ever-faithful cricket" is also a death omen. If the right ear tingles some one is praising you, and if the left someone is abusing you. If the right hand itches you will lose money, and if the left you will receive it, providing you rub or scratch it on wood. Any one of these omens from itching is good after sunset, and rubbing the right hand on wood saves the situation or the money in either case. To get dirt on one is most lucky,—"the dirtier the better." To stumble upstairs, [777] and to be looked at by a cat after it has washed its face, are signs of approaching marriage.

Dreams.—It is most unlucky to dream of church or clergy, and, above all, of the sacraments. To dream of a cat foretells an enemy; of a dog, a friend; of crows or filth, riches and plenty; of silver, disappointment; and of dirty or stormy water, trouble. Cheap dream books have corrupted local belief so much that it is now almost impossible to separate the older dream lore.

Divination.—I have not found many methods of foretelling the future, but the following were of such common knowledge that I need cite no single authorities. On All Hallows Eve, I remember, before 1870, a blindfolded person would touch one of several saucers in which were respectively earth, water, salt, a bean, etc., symbolising death, emigration, luck, marriage, etc., in

[4] Vol. xxi., p. 196.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

the ensuing year. In the same way a forecast was given by a ring, coin, bean, or red rag in the cake on the same day, and by a ring in the pancakes on Shrove Tuesday. On the former day also lead was melted and poured through a key handle into water for fortune-telling. The key of a bachelor's house or room and a piece of wedding-cake put under a girl's pillow produced a prophetic dream in which she might see her future husband or lover. A slug or snail put under a saucer on a slate or cabbage leaf, sprinkled with turf ashes or flour, traced the future lover's initials, as did a long apple or orange peel waved thrice round the head and then thrown down. "Cup-tossing" (*i.e.* cup-turning with tea leaves) was used, unsuccessfully, by a lady in 1879 to find out the future purchaser of her family's demesne. Wandering beggar-women used cup-tossing for the fortunes of both maids and mistresses, and some gained much repute. One of these crones showed a sister of mine a rearing horse in the tea leaves, and foretold that her client was about to have a very narrow escape from death on the hunting field that day, which came true. Biddy Erly, a famous white witch living between Bodyke and Feakle in the middle of last century, used to foretell the death or recovery of her patients by a shamrock leaf in some fluid in a bottle; if it rose they recovered, but if it sank they died, and her prophecies were received with such undoubting faith that it is likely that they worked sometimes their own fulfilments. I heard that by a Protestant servant a key was shut and tied up in a Bible, its wards on Ruth's reply when Naomi asked her to return from her, the book being then swung and the representative of Boaz surmised from the direction in which it pointed; but this may not have been true Clare folklore. Among the country folk crystal-gazing is unknown, and palmistry little, if at all, in use, but the more primitive methods have not been put down by increase of education, and the warning is still necessary of the quatrain cited in 1280, according to the *Cathreim Thoirhealbaigh*, by King Torlough mór O'Brien, as he set out to fight in this county,—"Attempt ye not the prediction of the lips; neither in curved (new) moon nor in presage of soothsayer put your trust."

787

[P. 226]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

XIV. *Calendar Customs.*

796 178 Most of these customs are so widely spread as to require only brief notice, and were noted, before 1816, by the Rev. James Grahame, the curate of Kilrush. They comprise the eating of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and of eggs at Easter; playing tricks and "fooling" on April 1st; setting May bushes before houses on Old May Day; lighting bonfires on Midsummer Eve, dancing round them, and driving cattle through them; beginning hunting on Michaelmas Day; Hallowe'en practices on October 31st; midnight processions, with music, on certain nights in the week before Christmas, (which had just been discontinued in 1816); and mummers, wren boys, and bull-baiting on St. Stephen's Day.[5] The May bush died out, I believe, during the dark years of the Great Famine; I never heard of any limit, other than the clearance of the crops, for beginning hunting; but, except the bull-baiting and the waits, all the rest still exist.

[825] It is well to have to record the dying out of the custom of killing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, even if it springs from laziness rather than from humanity. "Who cares for the birds but God!" was once retorted when I "put in a word for" the wren. There is probably a very old prejudice against it, for the "droleen" stood confessed as a "little druid" among birds, and the "druid" of Irish tradition was not the majestic white-robed priest of the oak grove, but a sorcerer who injured meanly by spells, a foe of God and of His servants, but a contemptible and impotent one. [889] This feeling was expressed in the contemptuous term *shandruee* ("old druid") for a worthless old man, in use in my boyhood. How far the wren rites have orthodox ritual or etiquette is doubtful. Formerly the youth of a whole district combined as wren boys, but now they go in bands of from two to six,[6] and the wren bush is often a mere branch with a few rags and no wren. A structure of evergreens, in general design like a *crux ansata*, covered with streamers and with the dead bird hung

[5] Mason's *Parochial Survey* (1816), vol. ii.

[6] See Plate IX., from a photograph taken on December 26th, 1910, by Mrs. O'Callaghan Westropp of Coolreagh.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

1796
178

up or in a sort of cage,[7] was till lately carried around. There is still sometimes to be found tolerable dancing and singing, as a break in the weary succession of small begging parties, shuffling and playing stupid buffoonery. The verses usually begin:—

178
539
796

"The wran, the wran, the king of all birds,
On Stephen's Day was caught in the furze."

but the next lines are greatly varied:—

"Although he is little, his family is great,
And (*or* So) I pray you all ladies (*or* good Christians) to give him a treat."

I noted the following haunting lines on Stephen's Day in 1909:—

"Put your hand in your pocket and take out your purse
And give us some money to bury the wran."

Equally melodious were lines in vogue some thirty years ago:—

"We broke his bones with sticks and stones,
And give us some money to get us a drink."

There was another form, evidently from an "artificial" source, heard by my elder brothers about Carnelly, perhaps sixty years ago or more:—

"Landlady, Landlady, give us some cheer,
Landlady, Landlady, give us some beer.
If you give us of the best,
We'll pray your soul in Heaven may rest.
If you give us of the worse,
We'll pray it will (*or* may) be quite the reverse."

796
178

It was generally believed that St. Stephen had hid in a cave, and that his retreat had been betrayed to his enemies by the wren. Mummers are now reappearing, after a long lapse of time, among the wren boys.

Another practice which my predecessors often saw before the Famine was the carrying of a sort of scarecrow figure, to represent St. Brigit, by women in August about the Clare Castle district. St. Brigit's rites in some places take place on Lady Day (August 15th).

Killing an animal, or a goose, at Martinmas and a goose at Michaelmas are of recent occurrence. On St. John's Eve I have, as a child, leaped over or passed between fires, and been told of cattle being forced to do the same. About 1895 very few bonfires were lighted, and the custom appeared likely to expire, but of late the

[7] A somewhat similar wren's cage has been procured for the National Museum, Dublin.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

178 fires have been more numerous. Formerly bones were saved up
796 to crackle as they burnt in the fires, and even when this ceased
the pronunciation "bone-fire" continued. Magical rites con-
[789] nected with milk and butter were, very recently, performed
secretly at wells on May Eve (April 30th) as described later.

526 Other annual observances were sports which first included, and
then lapsed into, mere races. The *iraghts*, or gatherings, at the
527 mound and inauguration place of Moy Eir (Magh Adhair) lasted
175 down to 1838, and were still very faintly remembered by old
people in 1890 as having died out in the Famine years, with so
much of the social brightness of the people. I may note that this
place,—the reputed seat of Adhar, a Firbolg prince, about the
beginning of our era,—became the place of inauguration of the
native princes of Thomond from before 877, and continued so
down, at least, to 1570. The name Magh Adhair (phonatically
Moy Eir) at first covered the whole central plain of east Clare, but
steadily shrank to that of a small tribal territory, and then, in
1584 and 1655, to the two townlands of Corbally and Toonagh
(Tuanagh-moyree). By 1838 it was attached only to two fields,—
"Moyross, or Moyree, parks,"—in the former, and is now confined
to a single field, "Moyars Park," and to the "rath" or mound
in Toonagh, across the brook. Notices of the inaugurations are
numerous from 1275 to 1311, and occur sporadically from 877
onwards. Other and less famous gatherings were at Creganenagh
("Fair or Assembly Crag")[8] on the bare hill over Termon in the
Burren, and at a field in Caherminaun near Kilfenora. The latter
probably gave the name Ballykinvarga, (Baile-cinn-mharghaidh in
1380), *i.e.* "head of the market," to the adjacent townland, and
may have been connected with the remarkable ring wall, girt with
a wide abattis of pillar stones, not far distant. Some forgotten
assembly is commemorated at Eanty ("Fairs" or "gatherings")
in the east of Burren. Other assemblages will be dealt with later
under XVI. *Patterns.*

XV. *Wells and Well Customs.*

423 Hesitation in questioning poor people too closely about their
religious feelings and rites has, I fear, rendered my notes on this

[8] Aenach was not merely a fair, but an assembly for merrymaking, consultation, etc.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

important subject somewhat bald. The pagan Irish, of course, reverenced wells, and the famous "King of the Waters" in Mayo was connected with St. Patrick by early biographers.[9] With the usual wise tactfulness of the ancient Irish missionaries all that was harmless was adopted into the new religion, and the wells lost none of their old observances and honour. The dedications of the Clare wells form a most valuable record, for, even when the founder of the church was forgotten, or a new patron invoked, the well usually kept the name of the ancient local saint. Unfortunately since about 1850 names of wells have been locally forgotten, and a re-dedication, often to St. Joseph, is common. Strange to say, the noteworthy saints Enda and Luchtighern are forgotten at the wells at their churches. The early mediæval life of St. Senan, (Colgan, *Vita S.S.*, March), says that, when that saint was born at Magh Lacha, Moylough, there was no water at hand to baptize him,—a rare thing in County Clare,—so he told his mother to pull up three rushes, and a spring welled out. The tale was still told in 1816.[10] The life of St. Mochulleus (Mochuille or Mochulla), about 1141 tells us how that early seventh-century saint struck a rock near a lake to the north of Tulla and three streams broke out. The well dedicated to him to the east of Loch Graney is evidently intended, and *two* streams still flow from it down the hillside. Some have supposed the wells of Tobereendowny, ("well of the King of the Sabbath," or, as suggested by Prof. Macalister and others, "of the world"),—were dedicated to a pre-Christian deity. Tobereevul is dedicated to Aibhill.[11] The flooded dolmen, Tobergrania, is named from Finn's fugitive spouse, "Granny's bed" occurring also as a dolmen name in Clare. Among Christian dedications we have Tobercruhnorindowan (of "the creator of the world") at Killard, Tober Isa (of "Jesus"), and Tobernacrohynaeve (*i.e.* Tobar-na-croiche-naoimh, of "the Holy Cross"). To the Virgin are dedicated wells at Drimelihy-Westby, Kilmacduan, and Killadysert. Of non-local saints,—usually, it is probable, late dedications,—we find St. John has

[9] *E.g.*, in the *Tripartite Life*, ed. W. Stokes, among the early "annotations" of Tirechan.

[10] Mason's *Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., under Kilrush Parish.

[11] Cf. vol. xxi., p. 186.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

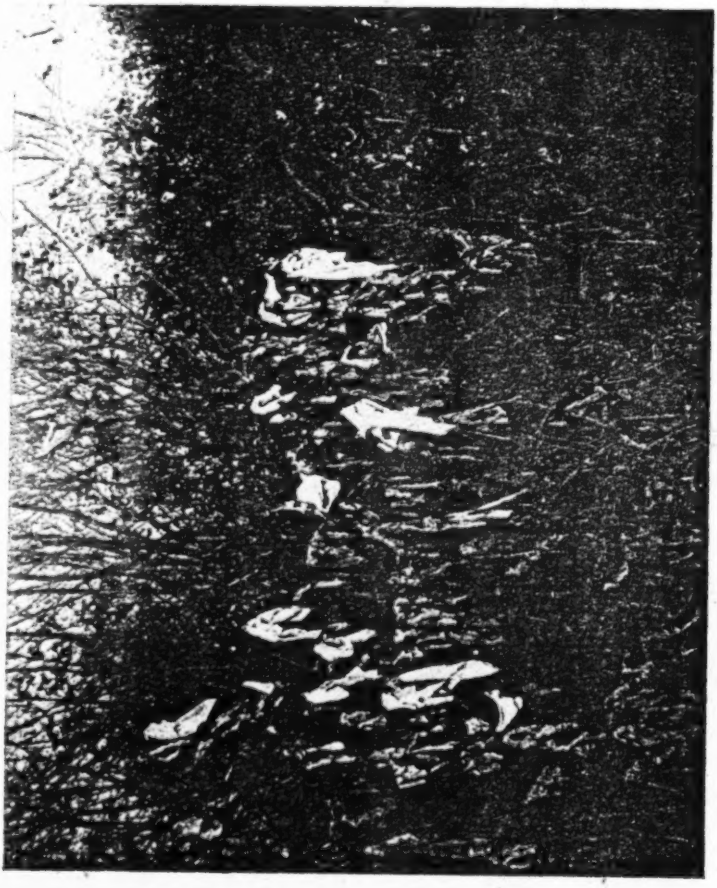
776 the wells of Killone and Tromra, St. Michael wells at Kilbrecan,
778 Cappagh (Bunratty) and the Kilmihils, St. Augustine at Kilshanny
823 and Gallynagry, St. Bartholomew at Toberpartholaun in Rath (Inchiquin), and St. Martin at Moyarta, Ballynecally, and Lemaneagh. All the dedications to St. Joseph are modern. St. Patrick did not enter Clare, but has wells at Correen (Kilnaboy), Clooney (Bunratty Barony), and Rossalia. The following list of wells dedicated to local saints may be useful for reference. *Brecan* (c. 480) has wells at Noughaval near Clare Castle (Kilbrecan), Doora, and Clooney (Bunratty); *Brendan* (date doubtful), at Kilmoon and Farighy (Moyarta); *Brigid*, (probably the Abbess of Feenish Island, c. 550), Kiltanon, Cappafeeaun, Finnor, and Coney Island; *Caimin* (d. 653), Iniscaltra and Moynoe; *Caritan* (c. 550), Kilcredaun in Kilballyowen, Kilcredaun near O'Brien's Bridge, and Kilcredaunadober near Bunratty; *Carrol* (doubtful), Kilcarrol, where a wooden image of him existed in 1816; *Colan* of Tomgraney (d. 552), to the west of that village; *Colman mac Duach* of Kilmacduach (c. 630), Kinallia, Oughtmāma (where "the three Colmans" probably originate in a confusion of texts), Teernea, Lough George, and Crusheen: *Columba* of Iona (d. 597), Crumlin and Glen Columbcille; *Cornan* (unknown), Kilcornan and Tobercornan in Gleninagh; *Croine* (unknown), Kilcrony and Liscrona in Moyarta; *Cronan* (probably of Tomgraney, c. 505), Inchicronan, Terryncronan, Killokennedy, and Corrakyle; *Dioma*, Kildimo; *Enda* (c. 480), Killeany; *Fachtnan* (doubtful), Kilfenora; *Flannan* (c. 680), Killaloe; *Imer* (unknown), Killimer; *Inghean Baoith* (c. 630), Kilnaboy, Commons, Glenseeade, Inakerstown, Killavella, Dulick (Templemaley), Kiltacky, Kilshanny, Aglish, Moy-Ibrickan, Magowna, Ballycoree, Shalee (two), Cullaun, Castletown (Spansil Hill), Dromumna, and Quin; *Kirin* (not Kieran), Kilkierin (locally Kilkereen); *Lachtin*, Kilnamona, Kilfarboy, and Stacpoole Bridge near Miltown Malbay; *Lonan* (c. 580), Killaspuglonane and Derrynavahagh (Kilmoon); *Luchtighern* (c. 550), Tomfinlough and, probably, Moy Ibrickan; *Macreehy* (c. 580), Kilmacreehy, Kilmanaheen, and Inagh; *Mainchin* (perhaps "St. Munchin," patron of Limerick), Kilmanaheen; *Mochonna* (unknown), Feakle and Moynoe; *Mochulla* (c. 620), Tulla, Templemoculla (Clonlara), Lough Graney, Lough

[P. 231]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

778
782

Plate X.



ST. SENAN'S TREE WITH RAG OFFERINGS, KILTINANLEA.

To face p. 230. [P 231]

[Facing p. 231]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

776 778 823

Breeda, Miltown, Kilgorey, Fortanne, Broadford, Trough, Ralahine, Cragg, Lahardan, and Cappavilla, with perhaps, (if not of St. Molocus, c. 550), Moylough, Scattery, and Carrigaholt; *Molua* (c. 620), Killaloe; *Onchu*, Killonaghan; *Sanctan*, Dromline; *Scrobann*, Clondegad and Kilmaley; *Senan* (d. 552), Iniscatha, Moylough, Iniscaeragh (Mutton Island), Kilclogher, Carrow (Kilmaduan), Erribul (Kilfiddan), Kilshanny, Killaneena, Cooraclare, Kilcredaun, and Drim (Quin); *Tola* (c. 635), Dysert O'Dea and Kiltola; and *Voydan* or *Braighdean* (unknown), Kilvoydan, Corofin, and Kilraughtis.

757 778 823

Healing Powers.—The *Ordnance Survey Letters*[12] mention the following:—Gleninagh well, which has a fifteenth-century well-house or "turry," cured sore eyes; Tober Cholmain, above Oughtmāma churches, sufferers from "the pearl," the films falling off the eyes at the third washing; St. Maccreehy's well, near Liscannor, eye troubles, which were also cured by St. Inghean Baoith's well near Kilshanny (even then nearly deserted), Tobermoghna near Clooney (Corcomroe), St. Senan's well on the cliffs south-west from Kilkee, Kilcrony well near Carrigaholt, Tobercuan in Kiltrellig near Loop Head, Tobershenan in Moyfadda, the Virgin's well at Templemaley, and Tober Isa at Corlack Glebe (Bunratty). Tobernatasha, ("well of the relic" or, as some say, "spectre"), in Kilmaley was shaped like a coffin, and delicate children used to be laid on their backs in it.[13] The black mud which gave its name to Toberduff cured sore eyes and swelled limbs. So did Senan's well at Kilkee; horrible to tell, the devotees,—down to 1875, at least, when a washing-tank was made outside the well-house,—used to wash in this, the only supply of drinking-water for the then fashionable watering-place. Toberlachtin at Kilnemona cured several diseases, its "day" being March 19th. Eyes were also healed by the well south from Newmarket-on-Fergus, and by the wetted moss of St. Mochulla's well near Tulla (the moss being put back to complete the cure). The latter well is said to have avenged itself, about 1780, on its landlord, who had dug away part of its enclosure, by rendering

[755]

[12] Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Mss. 14B 23. 24, (Co. Clare), vols. i. and ii.

[13] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 183.

[P 232]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

his son and daughter imbecile. The son survived till 1853, and no other members of the family were affected after the well was restored.[14] The Newmarket well indignantly removed itself to its present site when "a dirty woman washed her feet in it," and it also gave her the complaint it usually cured. So, also, when the holy well above Oughtmāma[15] was offended, it closed, and broke out lower down the hillside, as the Sruhaunanaeve or "saints' stream," and the water of Killone well refused to boil. The Cunninghams, living near it, spoilt their cooking by using its water, though "they knew it would not boil." John Windele tells of other resentful wells in Cork and Kerry; for example, the well at Labba Molagga (Cork) ran dry when a woman washed her clothes in it, and at Maunaholtora the well near a dolmen ran dry, and its water refused to boil.[16] The Irish "Nennius" tells a story of ducks that could not be boiled because the water would not get hot while they were in it. In the last century a woman who drew water from a well and saw it did not boil found a fish in it. She took the fish back to the well, and the water then boiled without any difficulty. The mud of the dolmen or "well" of Tobergrania at Ballycroum cured sore or short-sighted eyes, and that of the bullaun or basin at Kiltinanlea church near Clonlara did the same. The well of St. Michael at Kilmihil was once powerful. Father Anthony Bruodin, a Franciscan and author of a history of his order[17] full of curious particulars about Clare before 1640, tells how "Lady" Mariana, wife of Thomas MacGorman, of the author's kinsfolk, had in 1632 long suffered from gout. The Archangel appeared to her in a dream, and bade her go to his church and dig where she should see rushes growing near it. Aided by her son and Dermot O'Quaely, the parish priest of Kilmihil, she found the well and was cured. Many other persons got similar relief, but there seems no tradition of any cures by it preserved among the people of Kilmihil.

Offerings.—It is right, on visiting a well, to make offerings of

[14] So Mrs. Connors at Fortanne.

[15] Pronounced Ooght-máw-mā. It is a weird spot with three ancient churches in a grassy basin on the flank of a terraced hill of bare grey limestone.

[16] Windele, Mss. Royal Irish Academy; Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, vol. iii., pp. 765-9.

[17] *Propugnaculum Catholicæ Fidei*, 1665.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

778
782
823

small objects, only of value as homage. Rag offerings are naturally most frequent where there is a "blessed bush" at the well, but they are frequently hung on a bramble, or even, on the Atlantic coast, kept in place by stones. Rags abounded, with other offerings, at Gleninagh, at least till 1899, being tied to the twigs of an old elder bush. They were hung in quantities on the stunted old hawthorn at Oughtmāma well, and were found at Tobersraheen, at Aglish graveyard in Ogonello, and on the large fallen hawthorn near the basin at Kiltinanlea. They are often accompanied by rosaries, religious medals, necklaces and ribbons, broken or whole plaster and china figures and vessels, and glass, buttons, pins, and nails. Such objects are abundant at many wells, such as the little rock well in Glensleade between the largest Berneens dolmen and the road, Killone altar, St. Senan's well near Kiltinanlea (Plate XI.), Fortanne, Kilseily, St. Lachtin's well near Miltown Malbay, Kilcredaun, and a well of St. Inghean Baoith (stopped by a too zealous Protestant, but recently reopened and dedicated to St. Joseph) near Inchiquin lake. The almost disused dolmen-well of Tobergrania had in 1893 two rude crosses of laths tied together, buttons, bottles, glass, crockery, and a coin.[18] In 1889 Kilfarboy well near Milltown was frequented on Sundays and Thursdays by sick persons, and abounded in such offerings as bits of leather, crockery, and blacking pots. (I am not certain whether this note refers to St. Lachtin's well or to one near Kilfarboy church.) China and pebbles have been offered at Kilcredaun in a cleft beside the Shannon estuary, and pebbles placed in the "Font" of Doughnambraher in central Clare.[19]

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

(*To be continued.*)

[P 234]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued from* p. 213)

XVI. *Patterns and Religious Rites.*

796 The three chief *patterns*, (or religious rites at wells and holy places), were held on Iniscatha or Scattery Island in the Shannon, at Killone near Ennis, and on Iniscaltra in Lough Derg. To all three thousands of persons came from Clare, Kerry, and more distant counties, until by degrees dissipation crept in and the clergy suppressed the festivals, leaving only a purely devotional shadow.

The Scattery pattern was held at the beginning of March, and celebrated St. Senan's victory over the "Cata" monster.[1] Its best record is a stone, which I last saw and sketched in 1875 in a garden at Naboclish Lodge in Kilkee, to which it had been brought from Kilrush by the late Capt. Kennedy. It had been brought over from the island to Kilrush when the pattern was suppressed by Dean Kenny,—some say in 1810 and others "before 1827," though the pattern was still celebrated in 1816. John Windele some sixty years ago thus copied it:—

"In the name of God, Amen | Bare head, bare feet, all pious Christians are to kneel | At every station say or read, five Paters, Aves and a Creed | Five times round each blessed place | singing hymns and partner (? pater) beads. | Round the altar is a first | And two noted stations on the strand annex (? are next). | Round the Island on the water's edge: | Fourth, the Nun's[2] tomb on the strand du (*sic*) west. | Whoever kneels and read (*sic*) a prayer will not meet a watery grave. | Bringing up a stone to Monument Hill[3] perform there and that's the fifth. | Sixth, N. East a place called Laoth[4] and at our Lady's church women stop. | Eighth, the large church. Ninth is the S^r (? Saviour's). Tenth is the bed called St. Synan's grave.[5] | The well is eleventh finish and pray for ye souls of ye erectors of this blessed place."

[1] *Cf.* vol. xxi., p. 477.

[2] St. Cannara, buried on the strand as the saint would not permit her to land on the island.

[3] Knocknanangel to the south of the cathedral.

[4] Lacht.

[562] [5] No woman dared approach, and still less enter, St. Senan's church, the most northern of the group. For a description and plan see *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvii., pp. 276–89. "S. F." says, (*The Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii., p. 547), that no woman dares to approach the Lady's Well.

[P 235]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

The names Thomas, James, and Patt. Cusack, and carvings of the round tower, Crucifixion, an angel, and a figure with a chalice, also appeared, as well as St. Senan with a crozier driving out a beast with a serrated back, belly, and tail, and the inscription "St. Synon and the Angel casting the amphibious beast out of the blessed Island." I could not find the stone after 1878. The devotees in 1816 took their rounds about the holy well annually on their bare knees, and it was the practice of those who could not conveniently attend to hire for a small payment some poor person to act as their substitute. The pattern was sometimes held on Easter Monday, and, as it was degenerating into drunkenness, the Roman Catholic Dean of Killaloe endeavoured to stop it.[6] His curate also persuaded several women to enter St. Senan's church, but their families were soon after evicted and left the Island, so that the fame of the saint's legendary misogyny was established more firmly than ever. But in 1878, when I first visited the Island, women entered the church without protest.

At Killone the great patterns have been long since suppressed,[7] and I could learn nothing about the actual rites. "Rounds" are still performed at other times, being frequently vowed in sickness or for a sick relative. The rite consists in going on the bare knees, with bare head, sunwise round the green tongue of land from the altar between the crags and the lake. This being done, prayers are offered at the altar itself. Some pilgrims also wash their heads, feet, and hands in the bathing tank. The details vary according to the vow, and count is kept of the rounds and prayers by the rounded stones on the altar.[8] None of the observances seem to extend to the neighbouring abbey. The Pilgrim's Road is still visible, running north from the well far towards Ennis. The altar was last repaired by Anthony Roche, an Ennis merchant, in 1731.

The patterns on Iniscaltra, in Lough Derg, have long been nearly forgotten. In 1877 an old boatman told me that he had heard from old people of the flotillas of boats from every side of the great lake, the villages of tents, and the crowds of beggars,

[6] Mason's *Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., p. 459, under Kilrush parish.

[7] The summer pattern on St. John's Day still attracts a fair number of devotees, but seems to have no very exceptional feature.

[8] Cf. *ante*, p. 50, and Plate III.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

devotees, and merrymakers. A legend was then told how a wild young squire of the Brady family in attempting to carry off a lovely peasant girl from the pattern was overtaken by the vengeance of St. Caimin. The boat was upset by a squall, and the squire and his "understrapper" (a foster-brother) were drowned; the girl and boatman clung to the keel, and floated ashore unharmed. The local horror of the sacrilege was emphasized by the gruesome addition that, when "the young master" was waked in the "big house" and the foster-brother in the barn, all stole away to the better entertainment, and, when the barn was unlocked in the morning, the bare skeleton of the instigator of the outrage was found covered with rats and *keerogues* (black-beetles). The horrible "turf rick legend"[9] says that the Iniscaltra pattern lasted for three days.

Other less famous patterns were held on the sandhills near Lehinch in honour of St. MacCreehy. The celebration got shifted to "Garland Sunday" (*Domhnach cruim duibh*, the last in July), and to the honour of St. Brigit of Kildare. It was finally replaced by races, which at Kilnaboy and elsewhere may also represent degenerated patterns.

At St. Lachtin's well, near Miltown Malbay, a few poor old people may be seen, especially on Sundays and Thursdays, making "rounds." These are usually two sets of five each,—the first on the causeway round the well, and the second on a wider circle "sunwise." The devotees take off their shoes, stockings, and hats, (or, if women, their shawls and bonnets), and start for the well repeating the prescribed prayers. They climb to kiss a cross on the branch of one of the weird old weather-bent trees in the hollow, and, lastly, pour water from the well on their faces, hands, and feet.[10]

Patterns were held near the very early church of Termonchronain, near Castletown in the Burren, and, not many miles away, on the last day of summer "rounds" are performed at the two altars of the oratory of St. Colman MacDuach at Kinallia.[11] Stations were held till late years at Kilmoon, and at Tobermogus,

[9] Cf. vol. xxi., p. 348.

[10] *Limerick Field Club Journal*, vol. iii., p. 15.

[11] Cf. *ante*, p. 50, and Plate IV.

[P. 237]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

and at Noughaval, both in Burren. At the last well a huge hollow ash collapsed before 1896, and the fragments rooted and grew up into considerable trees; the pattern was on Feb. 10th. The stations at Kilcameen Hospital near Kilfenora had nearly ceased by 1839. In that year the *Ordnance Survey Letters* record others at Tobermacraven well, in Kilshanny parish; Clooney, Corcomroe; Moy, Ibrickan, (Sundays and Thursdays); Tobernamanorha, at Moyasta Creek; St. Martin's well at Kilinny or Clarefield in Moyarta;[12] Toberkeereen, Killoffin, (on Sundays); and Ballynagun, Tobermurry in Drimeliky, and Tobersenan in Carhoo, these three being in Kilmacdúan. We have little information about these rites in eastern Clare, but stations subsisted in 1839 at Uggoon; St. Brigit's well, Kiltanon; the Tobermochullas at Knockdrumleague and Fortanne; St. Senan's well, Killaneena, Clonlea; and at Kilseily. Although opposed by the parish priest, stations were also held at Tobermaleery, south from Newmarket-on-Fergus.

796

Somewhat different from ordinary patterns are those held on Sundays at Lough Fergus.[13] A credo, paternoster, and other prayers are said, and then the devotees make a circuit round certain cairns, one called the "altar" having a rude "cross" at which the "rounds" commence. There is also a well, Toberlonan, a little more than a mile from the lake near Clooney church (Corcomroe), at which "rounds" are performed, but these are reputed to be useless until after the rites are done at the lake, with which the well is supposed to communicate by a long passage. It is possible that the Lough, being the source of the chief river in County Clare, was an object of worship in early times, as no church nor saint is connected with the shore and cairns, and the "cross" is natural.

There are "rounds" at other wells, but these depend for their time and details on the devotee, who very often does not know even the name of the patron of the well.

[12] Moyasta and Moyarta (Moyfertagh) are at opposite ends of the parish of the latter name.

[13] An excellent account, with a photograph of the "altar" and "cross," was published by Dr. George U. MacNamara in the *Limerick Field Club Journal*, vol. ii., p. 217.

[P 238]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

XVII. *Religious Objects and their Legends.*

778 538 Clare was once rich in religious objects, and some important ones have survived until our times, such as the Bell Shrine of St. Senan, the croziers of St. Blathmac of Rath and St. Tola of Dysert O'Dea, and the bells of Rath, Burren, and Kilshanny,—all, except the last, in the collection of the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin, besides the reputed bell of Iniscatha.[14] St. Colman MacDuach and St. Lachtin were also closely connected with the county, and the crozier of the first and shrine of the arm of the second are preserved in the Irish collection. We read in early records how the Norse, in their destruction of the monastery of Iniscaltra in 922, "drowned its relics and shrines" in Lough Derg. The early *Life of St. Senan* tells how his bell descended ringing from heaven, and the place where this is reputed to have happened is still shown at Cross, between Kildimo and Farighy. The richly-enshrined crozier of St. Flannan of Killaloe (c. 680), and the bell brought from Rome by St. MacCreehy (c. 620), were extant when their *Lives* were written in the middle of the twelfth century. Early in the seventh century "the relics of Columb, son of Crimthann, were brought in a wain" to Caimin of Iniscaltra.[15] There were a number of relics and a bell "gold-enshrined" at Tulla in 1318.[16] Recent legend tells of the bells of the round towers of Dromcliff and Kilnaboy being hidden in the pool of Poulaclug and the marsh below the latter monastery, and of a silver bell of Kilmoon or Killeany, in the Burren, hidden in the stream named from it Owennaclugga. A brass bell found in the round tower of Dysert was sold in Limerick about 1837. The Black Bell of the MacNamaras was probably one of the relics at Tulla, and may be the one attributed to St. Mochulla in 1141. The "Black Book" of that saint was probably a register, and existed down to 1627, when it was used (and disappeared) in a lawsuit

[14] It was exhibited in Dublin in 1853 by a Mr. John Cooke, and sold to the British Museum. There is no local tradition attached to it.

[15] *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, "Calendar of Oengus," (early ninth century, ed. Whitley Stokes), under Dec. 13, p. 182; also published by Henry Bradshaw Society.

[16] *Caitreim Thoirdhealbhaigh*:—"Tullach nan espoc sanctified by bell and precious mass, by relic, gold-enshrined, by rare piety and notable miracles."

[P 239]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

of the Delahoydes. The shrine of St. Lachtin's arm,[17] made for Cormac MacCarthy, king of Munster between 1118-27, was preserved in his church at Kilnamona, and about 1640 removed to Lislachtin Abbey in Kerry; no folklore seems attached to it. The crozier of St. Blawfugh, *i.e.* Blathmac, son of Onchu, was preserved at Rath, near Corofin, and then in a hole in the wall of the old chapel of Corofin, where it was used for very solemn swearing and was much feared. The crozier of St. Manaula (Bán Thola) of Dysert was purchased from an old woman, daughter of an O'Quin, its last hereditary keeper, and was held in great reverence for cures and as an object upon which oaths were taken. The most important of all these relics is the Clog-an-oir, or "golden bell,"[18] the empty bell shrine preserved by the Keanes of Beechpark, one of whom had married the daughter of one of the Keanes or O'Cahans the "coarbs" (*comharba*) or successors of St. Senan. It consists of a bronze cover of the twelfth century, adorned by later silver plates, and violation of an oath taken on this shrine twisted the perjurer's face or resulted in convulsions and death. It is told that a gentleman living in County Galway sent his servant to borrow the "bell" to test his servants about a theft. His messenger happened to be the thief, and on the way home again threw the dreaded object into the sea. He then boldly told his master that the Keanes would not lend it. "You are a liar," was the reply, "for there it is on the table before you." The man fell on his knees, and confessed. It was last asked for in 1834, when a farmer had been robbed of twenty pounds, and borrowed the "bell" to swear the neighbours after Mass. On the Saturday night before the ordeal his family was awakened by a crash, as something was thrown in through the window. This proved to be the missing notes, tied with the original string. There are many similar stories, and the Clog-an-oir is said to have been stolen, but to have always returned to its rightful owners.[19]

778
S38

[17] An illustration of this was published by Vallancey in 1770. See Mr. Geo. Coffey's *Guide to the Christian Antiquities in the Collection of the Royal Irish Academy*, pp. 53-4, 60-2, and for the croziers of Dysert and Rath and bell of Rath, *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxiv., pp. 337-9.

[18] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxx., pp. 237-44.

[19] Much of this information came from Mr. Marcus Keane of Beechpark, the present possessor, and the remainder from the paper cited in note 18.

[P.240]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions.*

I have had occasion to search, in Irish works of pre-Tudor date, for sidelights on the early fauna of Ireland, and the results, so far, are meagre. There is constant reference to dogs, cattle, horses, deer, and wolves, but rarely do any but the hound put on any definite shape. Even the bull plays little more part in the *Tain bo Cualgne* than Briseis does in the *Iliad*, and generally the animal is a mere appendage to an incident.

Cattle.—Place-names give us little information save as to the custom of driving the animals up to the hills in the summer time, Mount Callan being girt by a series of "Boolies" (*i.e.* milking places),[20] usually qualified by some phrase such as "of the sun" or "of the sea-gulls." The cow was the practical unit of value in olden times, three cows being worth a woman-slave, and a single one the "ounce," which seems to have been an imaginary standard. Legendary cows, such as the Glasgeivnagh and Glas gamhnach, play a large part in the traditions, the hoofmarks of the latter pitting all the rocks of eastern Burren and its borders. Another supernatural cow predominates in the extreme west of the barony, near Crumlin. The Seven Streams of Teeskagh were said to originate from the exuberant milk of a "Glas." Supernatural bulls and water cattle have already been dealt with.[21]

The most remarkable customs relating to cattle centre round Lough Fergus. Along its north shore stand twelve cairns in an irregular line. On the eighth from the east end are two natural stones resembling a small chair and a cross, named after St. Forgas, (who appears in none of the calendars and is perhaps a river-spirit). Along with these are put a china image, bits of iron,

[20] Boulavaun (white milking ground), Boulinrudda (red place), Boolinduff (black), Boulynamiscaun (of the dish), and Boulynagreana (sunny) at Callan; Booltiagh, Boolybrien, Boolynagleeragh (of the clergy), Boolyknockaun, Boolyneaska (of the eels), and Cloonbooley in Kilmaley; Boultiaghdine in Kilnaboy, (but the inhabitants say that Booltiagh means "mired by cattle" not "milking place"); Boulynamwella (of sea-gulls) in Kilmihil; Boolty-doolan in Killadysert; and Booleevin (pleasant) in Kilkeedy. In east Clare the name is rare, Boolynacaunk (of the Easter sports), in Slieve Bernagh, being the only one known to me.

[21] Vol. xxi., pp. 480-1.

[P 241]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

buttons, and broken crockery. Patients sit in the "chair" to cure lumbago. It is believed that the water of this lake cannot be boiled and that no one can be drowned by it, and sixty or seventy years ago cattle were cured by it. The beasts were brought in herds to the lake to drink, and were driven into it. If they turned to the right hand they would recover, but not if they swam to the left. It is said that on one occasion a cow sank, but was found next day grazing in a field beside the lake, completely cured. In consequence of drainage works, the water level has fallen, and the mud round the shore is too deep to allow the cattle to be driven through it, so on May Day every year, before sunrise, a little crowd gathers, of perhaps over 100 persons, to fill bottles with the water for curing cattle, especially of "the worm." The water keeps good till the next anniversary, and is also used to give a "good churning" and to clear a "garden" of caterpillars.[32]

In 1839 Lough Iona (now Eenagh) was reputed to cure sick cattle on Mondays and Thursdays.[33] In 1808 the smiths were in some districts employed to kill the cattle,—or rather to fell them for slaying,—and their perquisites were the animals' heads.[34]

Persons over sixty years of age are often firm believers in the charming away, or "taking," of milk and butter. The younger folk usually deny that they hold this belief, and, where they take part in quarrels caused by it, avowedly only do so to support their elders. Two families living in the south-east corner of the county had about 1890 a quarrel resulting in a serious feud, hardly as yet appeased. It seems that for about three years the cows of the first household gave but little milk, and that little so bad and unwholesome for pigs and calves that several died. Ordinary veterinary practitioners, and even the local "knowing men," did no good, so the farmer sought a "wise man" of renown in another parish. This sage directed his client to watch the local well all May Eve, and to let no one come near it till after midnight. The farmer and his sons hid near it, saw a man and a woman of the

[32] *The Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, vol. ii.

[33] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 161.

[34] Hely Dutton, *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare*, p. 359. The smith was a magician amongst the Irish, and the ancient *St. Patrick's Lorica* prays against the spells of "smiths, women, and druids."

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

627 suspected family coming to the well, and sprang out and bade the
233 newcomers keep away. The parties quarrelled, and were rein-
823 forced, as the news spread, by all the women, children, dogs, and sympathisers of both families. At last guns and hay-forks were brought, and blood was on the point of being shed, when some one found that midnight had passed, and the contestants at once went home. The cattle gave good milk all that year, and the well was watched on succeeding May Eves with equally good results. The bitterness is said to have died out round the well some years ago, but is still apparent between the households in other matters.[25]

234 A charm to cure "slow churning" has already been described.[26]
789 In 1892 a horrible case of stirring milk with a dried human hand
826 in order to "bring butter" was reported from the Kilkee district, but I could never learn the details. A similar practice somewhat earlier, near Oola on the borders of Limerick and Tipperary, was brought to light after the death of a farmer by a quarrel, ending at the sessions, between his three sons for the possession of the ghastly object.

234 The method of "taking butter" practised near Craigbrien, to
789 the south of Ennis, was to take a hair from the tail of each of the victim's cows on May morning, twist the hairs together, and dip them in the milk.[27] I heard of a protective knotting of seven hairs in each cow's tail near Edenvale in the same district, and of a magic dashing of water over the churn when the butter was slow to come,—an excellent natural aid in hot weather. The greasy substance called "May butter," lying on the grass with the dew, was used for milk charms near Clonlara. I heard of it more
[791] definitely at Kenry, County Limerick, where a woman gathered it in her apron, and a hare was seen rolling and rubbing itself in the "May butter"; the hare, when pursued, turned into a local witch. If you come into a house where churning is in progress, you should always "put your hand to the churn," *i.e.* give a few strokes

[25] So told to me by the late Hugh Massy Westropp, who, as nearest magistrate, had to intervene to keep the peace on more than one occasion, and was called up to the well on one May Eve.

[26] Vol. xxi., pp. 195-6, as told by the late Miss W. Westropp of Fortanne.

[27] So late Mrs. Stacpoole of Edenvale.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date) 1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

with the churn "dash," and if you are smoking you should finish the pipe in the house, or you may "take" the butter. There is still living to the south of Ennis a man who is afraid to touch a churn lest the butter should "go away," and he get the discredit of "butter-taking." (I may boast myself of the repute of having "the lucky hand" that "brings" the butter quickly.) Long ago the O'Briens of Kells near Corofin told the late Dr. G. U. Mac-Namara of the latter place how one "Donogho buidhe" (yellow Donal), a local "fairy man," being offended one day about getting a glass of whiskey, left the house angrily. After his exit no amount of churning would bring the butter. He was pursued and appeased, and took a bit of paper from under the churn, when the butter came at once. In a case in the Tulla district in which a farmer's butter was "taken," he consulted the priest, by whose direction he searched in the corner of his corn-field, and found a small sheaf with a hazel rod in it. After destroying this the butter "came" in great abundance.[33]

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

[33] Cf. *ante*, p. 58.

(To be continued.)

[P. 244]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued*).

XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions* (*continued*).

Horse.—I have found no folklore relating to horses except that already given regarding supernatural animals.[1] I have since recalled a legend of a dangerous spectral horse, probably a *púca*, haunting the bridge over the Blackwater, between Limerick and Clonlara, and the tree-darkened road towards the latter place,—a terror by night to passengers till about twenty years ago. There was also the bodiless head of a spectral horse which used to float beside cars on a road near Clooney, of which I heard about 1876, but now forget the details. The riding of horses by fairies was not unknown.

Dog, Fox, and Hare.—Besides the supernatural dogs already noted,[2] and the "Red Dog" (or Fox?), near Cragmoher, at Drehidnavaddaroe Bridge, there is little to tell. Finn's famous hound Bran was drowned at Tirmicbrain lake, and a ghastly dog broke the bones in some graveyard, (perhaps Doora or Clooney), before 1876.[3] It is unlucky to meet a fox, a red-haired woman, or a hare "first thing" in the morning. The hare is said to eat human flesh,—probably from being often "started" in graveyards. I have been told by several Clare people of witches turning into hares, but the alleged incident was never located in the county.

Seal.—A very vague belief prevails on the coast that seals are

[1] Vol. xxi., pp. 481-2.

[2] Vol. xxi., pp. 482-3.

[3] As in most of my recollections of folk-tales heard before 1876, the details are forgotten.

825
796
[777]
[791]
[p. 245]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

825 776 enchanted human beings.[4] It gets more definite above Galway Bay, where the Kinealeys are of reputed seal descent. Some such belief may underlie the name Cumarra (or sea-hound) in the MacNamara family. I found more difficulty in getting fisher beliefs in recent years than in getting folklore from the country people. Much of what I heard in 1906 was probably of tourist origin, and, like the *merrow* at Killard,[5] not to be trusted as genuine belief.

Otter.—Beyond vague belief in an enormous "durracow"[6] (the king of the otters), which I heard of as a child on the Shannon Bank about some unnamed lake in east Clare, I am not aware of any folklore about this creature in the county. There was said to be a "remarkable" otter at Glenomera.

Cat.—The cat was much regarded by the early Irish, and holds honourable place in their ancient code of laws. It even appears in the illuminations of the *Book of Kells*. Numerous places in Clare bear its name, but local belief tends to consider the "cat" in these names as a weird monster. The "Cata" and "Faracat" of legend[7] were probably "dragons." The cat has supernatural knowledge. If a cat looks fixedly at a person without apparent reason it forebodes sickness or death, but if it does so to an unmarried person, after making its toilet, it foretells marriage.

[763 787]

[4] So in Aed Baclamp from the *Book of Lismore*, (*Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 72), St. Brendan changes 30 seals into horses, which carry into the sea their riders, who, on reaching it, are, like their steeds, changed into seals.

[114]

[5] Vol. xxi., p. 342. Mrs. Dorothea Townshend of Oxford calls my attention to the probability that this story was made up by Dr. Keightley (v. App. to his *Fairy Mythology*). In my original Ms. I expressed great doubt as to this story, having found no equivalent to it near Dunbeg or Kilkee, but this was unfortunately omitted in publication. The Miltown mermaid was probably one of the white seals occasionally seen on the coast.

[6] *I.e. Dobharchu*, water-hound. The Irish called the wolf *faol-chu* (wild hound) and *cu allaid*, and the marten *crann chu* (branch hound). The more common name for the wolf in Clare is *breagh*, as in Breaghva and Breffy, the name of several townlands. The other wolf name *Mac Tire* (son of the country), is attached to Knockaunvicteera hill near Lisdoonvarna (where it refers to the animal), and to Cahermactire, a fort near Inchiquin Hill; at the latter place it may refer to a person, as the name Mac Tire is found in various annals.

[7] Vol. xxi., pp. 477-9.

[P. 246]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

The wild cat is believed to have a spike or hook at the end of its tail which it can stick into a pursuer, but I found no such fine legend in Clare on this point as I did near Kenry in Limerick, where the cats pursued, and anchored themselves on, a farmer and his dog, after chasing them from Clorane to Old Kildimo! 825 776

Elk.—The Irish elk is known among the turf cutters of Clooney and Tulla as the "Fiaghmore" (so pronounced, but really *fiadh mor*, big deer),—"it might be one of the deer Finn hunted." Its numerous remains have given to one townland the name "Fiaghmore, Fiah,"[8] in 1655. The "Agallamh"[9] has an interesting allusion. Diarmaid kills a huge deer, and its antler, when resting on his foot, reaches above his head, despite his great height. Caoilte produces this horn from a lake to convince St. Patrick of the truth of his stories of the heroes.

Badger, Squirrel, and Marten.—It is asserted that there are two kinds of badgers,—the "dog-badger," which eats carrion and digs into graves, and the "pig-badger," which is a strict vegetarian and is eatable. In the *Boroma* tract from the *Book of Leinster*,[10] and the "Agallamh," badger bacon and squirrels are mentioned as fit to set before a king or hero. It is doubtful whether the *togmal*, (kept as a pet by Queen Maeve and killed on her shoulder by Cuchullin's slingstone), was a squirrel or a bird, but squirrel skins, along with marten skins, formed a considerable export from Ireland at least from 1230 to 1580, and in 1686 Roderic O'Flaherty names the squirrel amongst the animals of Connaught.[11] The true marten was until recently common in east Clare, and, like the supposed "marten-cat" (a large red domestic cat that has gone wild), was reputed uncanny in my boyhood. I have seen martens at play in the Clare woods in 1869, and had one stuffed in 1876, but they seem now to be extinct. [262]

Hybrids.—Besides the "dog-badger," there were said to be uneatable hybrids of the cat and the rabbit, and of the rook and [262]

[8] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxiv., p. 94.

[9] *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 176. Antlers over six feet long have been found in Clare, and there is a fine single antler 6 ft. 2 in. long at Violet Hill, Broadford.

[10] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xiii., p. 47.

[11] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xl., p. 245.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

825 776 [262] the domestic hen. The "soft egg laid by the cock" was looked on with suspicion, and so was the egg of the bat, which was even unlucky to find, and could be used for malignant charms.

Stoat.—In Clare the stoat is always called "weazel." A corruption of the strange Irish name *Feasóg* (the little beard) is as often used, even by English speakers, as the *whishshoge* or *whushshoge*. The creature was equally disliked and respected. It is wished "Good morning, ma'am," by some, and generally saluted by raising the hat on meeting; but others spit and cross themselves. It is regarded as peevish and persistent; "as cross as a bag of weazels" is a proverb in east Clare, while Finn is compared to a weazel in the pursuit of Diarmaid and Grainne. I have heard many stories about its revengefulness "when its nest is killed," and of one of its persistent attempts to get at a corpse in a house in south-east Clare, rather, it was thought, for magical purposes than from hunger. Old belief ascribed to the animal the power of poisoning. At Carnelly a labourer told that when cutting a meadow near the "Druids' Altar"[12] he killed a young weazel. Soon afterwards his wife brought him his dinner and a can of sour milk. While they talked, she cried out that a weazel was spitting into the can, but the man laughed and drank the milk. Soon afterwards he got violent gripes, and gave himself up for lost. The doctor had great difficulty in persuading him to try any remedy, and his wife was almost scandalized by his recovery. A similar tale was told at my old home, Attyflin, in which young weazels were not killed but put on a wisp of grass safely in a bush. The parents were seen spitting into the milk, but, on finding the young ones safe, they returned and upset the can.[13] So "even the weazel has justice." Both stories probably originated in the animal's love for milk.

[775] *Rat.*—A Clare woman told me that a man whose love was rejected by a girl living in Limerick city died, and his soul went into a rat and used to bite her throat until she had to emigrate.[14] The rat tried to follow her and was drowned, and so the persecution ended. A curious "parliament of rats" was held near Durra in

[12] Mrs. O'Callaghan of Maryfort and others.
[13] Late Hugh Massy Westropp.
[14] Mrs. M. MacCormick.

[P. 248]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Upper Bunratty, the fields being covered with them, but, when it broke up, the "troops" dispersed, and no bands were seen at any distance from the rendezvous. A rat was "heard talking with the Devil" in the grave of an unpopular person before 1875, but how the holders of this curious conversation were identified was never stated. I have met a belief in speaking rats in eastern Clare and among fishermen at Kilkee.

Hedgehog.—This animal is reputed to steal apples and suck cows and eggs, so that it is persecuted and called *grainoge* (little ugly thing).

Birds.—A pair of ravens roosted in a top window of the round tower of Iniscatha (Scattery) early in the last century. The birds were said to escort their young, when fully fledged, across the Shannon to Carrigfoile Castle in Kerry, and not to let them return to the island.[15] Scaldcrows (roystons) are considered unlucky, and much feared. The old Irish regarded them as incarnations of the war-goddess Bodbh.[16] Birds as omens have already been noted.[17] The bat is looked on as a sort of bird, and it is ominous of death for it to fly at one's face. The entry of a robin into a house is a death omen near Tulla, but elsewhere a sign of good fortune. Although swans are so plentiful that I have often seen more than forty together in Inchiquin and other lakes, the only folklore associated with them seems to be a tale of swan-maidens at Inchiquin. The hunting of the wren has been described in Section XIV.[18]

Fishes.—It was regarded as a custom among the fishermen of Kilrush and Scattery that no one should go fishing for three days after the arrival of the herring shoals, but, when the first day dawned, a crowd of boats was always discovered, and much quarrelling resulted.[19] As the shoals arrived, a mass used to be celebrated on the shore at Kilmurry, Ibrickan, to secure good

[15] *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii., p. 546.

[16] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. x.; *Revue Celtique*, vol. i.; Joyce, *Social History of Ireland*, vol. i., p. 267.

[17] Vol. xxi., p. 190.

[18] *Ante*, pp. 206-7, and Plate IX.

[19] Hely Dutton, *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare* (1808), pp. 228, 259.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

226 825 fishing and to keep off dogfishes and small sharks.[20] The reputed giant lake pikes and eels have already been mentioned.[21]

"*Worms.*"—Newts, lizards, and large caterpillars are included by the peasantry under this term. They are supposed to be very dangerous to both men and cattle, and are relentlessly destroyed. 825 Of late years I have even had difficulty in saving the pretty little grey lizards, now much rarer than when, over thirty years ago, they swarmed in Clare Abbey and other sunny and sheltered ruins. A colony of unfortunate little lizards in a hollow tree was reported to me as "a nest of adders." My informant[22] about the sacrifice on the dolmen of Maryfort,—the daughter of an old Peninsular veteran, living near Clonlara,—told me a circumstantial tale which was faintly remembered at Clonlara many years later. A "worm with legs" ran down a man's throat as he slept in a field, and he pined away, with an ever-increasing appetite, until he was persuaded to consult a "wise person." He was kept from drinking for two days by the expert, and then fed on bacon and taken to a stream. The patient's mouth was fastened open, and a freshly-toasted piece of bacon put near it. The thirsty "worm" heard the running water, and came out into the man's mouth, where it smelt the meat and sprang on it, fixing its claws in it. The "wise man" then threw the bacon into the water, and the man rapidly recovered. A similar story from near Tulla ended in the "worm" drinking and trying to jump back into the patient's mouth, but being killed by the doctor.[23] Children were told that, if they slept with their mouths open, "worms" (apparently caterpillars of the death's head or the puss moth in Inchiquin and central Clare) or

[20] Canon Dwyer, *Diocese of Killaloe*, p. 503, writes unsympathetically about this touching faith of the poor fishers.

[21] Vol. xxi., p. 480. [22] Mrs. Eliza Egan; see *ante*, p. 51.

[23] I have heard an almost identical story told among my mother's relatives as happening in Lancashire. [The belief in "animals in people's insides" is almost universal in the British Isles; for examples see *N. & Q.*, 1st S., vol. vi., pp. 221, 338, 466, vol. ix., pp. 29, 84, 276, 523; 6th S., vol. i., pp. 311, 392; 9th S., vol. vii., pp. 222, 332, 390, vol. viii., pp. 89, 346, vol. xi., p. 467, vol. xii., pp. 414, 471; *Folk-Lore*, vol. x., p. 251; *British Medical Journal*, 1906; and many newspaper paragraphs, such as one in *Morning Leader*, June 3, 1908. I have heard the tale told in London with a large community of cockroaches as the tenants.—Ed.]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

frogs (at Newmarket-on-Fergus) would creep down their throats. The finding of flukes and other parasites in sheep and cattle has helped the belief, and a beast's tongue, if swollen, is supposed to have been "stung by a worm." We have already noted a cure for "worm" in cattle,[34] and the milk of the "Seven Sisters" plant[35] boiled in milk cures similar cases in human beings.[36]

Frog.—Besides jumping down children's throats, the frog cures a cough if held by the legs, put for a moment into the sufferer's mouth, and returned to the water.[37] In a variant of the Bishop Hatto legend, at Bohatey, near Lough Derg, frogs mob and devour a boy who has tortured one of their number.[38] Frogs are said to have been rained on a field in eastern Burren more than once.

Insects etc.—An old woman at Maryfort in 1869 scandalized her neighbours by asserting butterflies to be dwellings of the human soul, and that her own soul would go into a "blessed (tortoise-shell) butterfly." Whence she derived this belief is unknown. I heard about the same time, and, it may be, from the same source, a horrible story of a "spider as big as a *bonnive*" (young pig) sucking the blood of children in the dark, but I forget the details. It is lucky to kill the "daudayle" (*dubh dael*) or "devil's coach-horse," for this hideous but harmless creature has the repute of having guided Judas to Gethsemane.[39] When it "cocks up its hind end," you should crush it, preferably with your bare foot, for you are then spared a day, hour, or week in Purgatory. In Clare I have only found this belief near Tulla, but it is common in other counties.

[34] *Ante*, p. 58. [35] Cf. *ante*, p. 57.

[36] So the late Michael Haselton, an astrologer and herb doctor near Limerick.

[37] So Mrs. O'Callaghan.

[38] So Capt. Hibbert of Woodpark. A similar tale is told about toads by Giraldus Cambrensis, *Itinerary in Wales*, cap. ii.

[39] In Ulster the "connach worm" replaces the beetle. The tale says that men were sowing a corn-field when Our Lord and the faithful disciples passed, and that He told the sowers to inform His pursuers that they had last seen Him when they were sowing. The corn at once sprang into ear, and the pursuers, on getting the answer to their enquiry, were turning back when the worm cried out that the seed had only just been sown. The Ulster tale was collected by Mr. W. F. De Vismes Kane, D.L., of Monaghan. In Clare Island (Mayo) Mr. N. Colgan found a similar tale told of St. Patrick and his enemies.

825
[757]
[774]
[184]
[P. 251]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

824 753 757 824 [752] 824 [777 789]

Plants.—The "hungry grass" grows on mountains, and, if trodden on, causes a sickening hunger which kills if not relieved. I knew a man in County Limerick who said he "knew it to happen to another man" on the Clare hills, and the victim got food in bare time to save him.[30] Seven strips of a plantain leaf stop the bleeding of a bad wound. The "Seven Sisters" plant for healing purposes must be picked at a particular period of the sun and moon in August. Fern "dust" (seeds) heals cuts from rushes; the dock charms nettle stings; and the four-leafed shamrock brings luck if found accidentally. The belief that house-leek preserves a house from burning[31] is widespread in north and east Clare. The pennywort has a sectarian bias, and only cures Protestants,[32] and this is connected near Bunratty with a curious legend of Anne Boleyn. This hapless queen, after enjoying by means of the plant the greatest influence over her terrible spouse,[33] "got into trouble, but, when she was sent to jail, she couldn't get the plant, and they hanged her." The rowan, or mountain ash, is a luck-bringer and preservative from magic, and I remember small forked twigs being carried. A rowan, planted at Iniscaltra about 890 by King Cormac mac Cuileanan, bore apples.[34] Moss from a skull, or an ancient cross such as that at Dysert O'Dea, or a pillar, is curative; the moss at Fortanne well was used for the eyes, but had to be replaced. If you see a "button mushroom" you should pluck it, as "it will never grow any more once it is looked at."[35]

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

(*To be continued.*)

[P. 252]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

A FOLKLORE SURVEY OF COUNTY CLARE (*continued*).

XIX. *Rocks, Caves, and Stones.*

133 773 823 *Rock markings.*—The strange marks left in the flat crags by the weathering of softer portions and of fossils have caused numerous legends. The dish-like hollows in the crags below the hermitage of St. Colman MacDuach, at the great "Cliff of the Eagle," in Kinallia, the name Bohernameesh (*bothar na mias*, *i.e.* road of the dishes), and marks like the footprints of men and animals all seem to have been seized on by the saint's biographers.[1] Colman, brother of King Guaire "the hospitable," of Hy Fiachrach Aidhne (the district round Gort), early in the seventh century retired to fast and pray in the wilderness. After a most austere observance of Lent, a companion monk yearned for meat, and Colman pitied him and prayed. The king's Easter feast therefore flew to the hermitage, pursued by the whole Court. Terrified by the angry warriors Colman again prayed, and their feet and the hoofs of their horses stuck fast in the rocks. The legend is still told in a form identical with that in the Life.[2] The servant is said to have died from the feast, and his grave is shown beside the Boher.[3]

Where Burren and Inchiquin meet, on the Glasgeivnagh Hill,

[1] Cf. *The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick* (ed. W. Stokes, Rolls Ser.), p. 405.

[2] Colgan, *Acta SS. Hiberniæ.*

[3] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 100 (Ms. Royal Irish Academy).

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

the marks on the fretted rocks are attributed to the grey cow of Lon mac Leefa (Liomhtha). It is a very lonely and impressive spot. Ascending at the beautiful waterfall of the Seven Streams in Teeskagh, (a curtain of silver network over a cliff, sheeted with long moss and ferns, with ledges white with anemones, in spring, and fields blue with gentians), the great triple stone fort of Cahercommaun is seen on the edge of the northern cliff, and the way passes another early enclosure, with ruins of huts, called Cahernaglasha, where the *Glas* cow was stabled and her seven keepers lived. The highest point of Slievenaglasha,—rising 700 feet above the sea, which is visible far to the west,—has fourteen cairns and overlooks a long shallow valley, with strange brown patches here and there and another strong ring wall over a little cave. The patches are the *labbas* or beds of the *Glas* and her calf, the waterfall sprang from the abundant milk of the cow, and the fort is Mohernagartan ("the smith's fort"), the residence of Lon the Smith. The footprints of the wonderful animal and of Lon's seven sons are visible on every crag, and the cave with strange cinder-like débris is the reputed forge of the "dark brown Luno" of (Macpherson's) Ossian.[4]

At Ballynahown in Corcomroe, overlooked by the bold peel tower of Ballinalacken, are traces of the *Heanbo* (single cow), which differs from the *Glas* and gives its name to the Labbanaheanbo, a cave high up in the face of a magnificent cliff. In this bed the Heanbo will support the Leinster man who will win the freedom of Ireland in the last great battle. The cave is at the junction of three townlands, but is in none of them.[5]

On Scattery Island were two stones (still, I think, visible), one called Glun Senain because marked by the knee (*glun*) of St. Senan, and the other the stone on which St. Cannara[6] floated from Kilconry to the holy isle of the woman-fearing saint.

[4] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 100. I gave the legend in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxv., p. 227, and it is still told in the locality.

[5] From M[illegible] Kelleher and Hilary of Oughtdarra, to whose kindness and local knowledge I am much indebted. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] Vol. xxii., p. 332, n. 2.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

776 823 Another knee-stone of St. Senan was beside the creek of Poulanishery on the opposite shore to Scattery. Between Dysert O'Dea and Rath Blamaic a rock with two basins bore the marks of St. Manawla's knees when she carried off the round tower of Rath.[7] St. Columba's thumb and finger marks are shown on a limestone boulder in the road fence near the lane to his entrenched church in Glen Columbcille. The bosses on the "plague stone" at Tomfinlough church were the two plague swellings torn from a woman's head and thrown against the stone by St. Luchtighern.

773 823 Not only the saints, but also Finn MacCumhail and his warriors have left marks on the rocks of Clare. A huge rock named Cloughmornia or Cloughlea, near Ballysheen and not far from Sixmilebridge, has in its sides long straight gashes where Finn and his band tried (or sharpened) their swords.[8] Finn's fingerprints are visible on a rock which was brought to Cullaun House near Quin early in the last century by the facetious Tom Steele from Birr in King's County, where it was seen by Thomas Dineley about 1680. The stone was called "the Navel of Ireland,"[9] and the V-marks are now regarded as the footprints of the cock that crowed at St. Peter's denial.

Hughey's Rock, a great boulder on the brow of the ridge between Edenvale and Rockmount near Ennis, bears the finger-marks of Hughey, a giant who threw it at another giant from Mount Callan.[10]

Caves.—I have heard at Newhall of a cave "between Ennis and Lisdoonvarna" in which runs an underground river that

[7] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 50. A similar legend occurs in the *Book of Lecan*.

[8] *The Battle of Magh Leana*, p. 30 (notes). The legend was still surviving at Ballysheen in 1899.

[9] *The Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Society*, vol. viii. (1864), p. 360. The cock legend is often represented on tombstones etc., and appears at Ennis Abbey (1460). In a version gathered by me in eastern Limerick, the cock says,—"I'm only a cock, and you're an apostle; but I'm the better gentleman any day!" In *The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, p. 415, the Angel Victor in the form of a bird leaves footmarks on a stone.

[10] So told me by Shaneen (Little John) O'Halloran at Edenvale in 1869 and later.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

773
823

makes old people young. The exact locality is unknown, as the people who have gone to use it have never been seen again. Lismulbreeda cave, in Dromcliff parish and near the Kilrush road, is marked all over its soft sandstone sides and roof with crosses, figures, and initials, which it is considered lucky to cut on a visit. Horses are said to have come out of the Kilcorney cave, and left descendants in the valley below.[11] The caves of the Broc-sidh and Faracat have already been mentioned.[12] There is a tale of a wild boar in a cave some miles to the north-east of Feakle.

Dolmens.—These were supposed to be giants' graves, and, if called "altars," the word was understood in a Christian sense, with a belief that they had been used for the mass during the prevalence of the cruel penal laws. For example, Altoir Ultach was said to be named from an Ulster priest who served the mass there in the eighteenth century because the nearest magistrates were more tolerant than those of the north.[13] There is no evidence of any general popular belief that they were pagan altars, such an idea, where it existed, being derived from the "learned ignorance" of local gentry. The dolmens were, and are, called *leaba* (*labba*, "bed") and *leaba Diarmuid agus Grainne* (*labba 'iermuth a'us graunya*) from the elopement of those famous lovers. Legend on the west coast of Clare told that Diarmuid, finding that Finn could learn all the movements of his wife by biting his prophetic thumb, put seaweed on the cover of the dolmen. Finn, finding that seaweed was over the lovers, imagined

[11] This cave was famous in the eighteenth century for throwing out floods of water full of fish—(cf. *inter alia*, Gough's *Camden*),—and this is remembered traditionally, although the floods have been rare and insignificant since 1833. Other similar phenomena are recorded in Irish annals; *e.g.* in the Ulster Annals in 759 "Bennmuilt poured forth a stream with fishes," and in 867 "a strange eruption of water from Sliabh Cualann with little black fishes."

[12] Vol. xxi., pp. 180, 183, 479. The Faracat, according to *The Adventures of the Three Sons of Thorailbh*, was a monstrous cat having a crescent on its forehead and a sharp nail in its tail.

[13] In fact, the Westropps, Drews, and Patersons acted as trustees under friendly "Protestant discoveries" to preserve the properties of the O'Briens, Macnamaras, and Barretts from the hostile effect of the laws, c. 1730-90.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

773 823 [831 778] [842]

that they had drowned themselves, and gave up the pursuit.[14] Possibly the legend originated the association of indecency with the Clare dolmens found in 1808 by Hely Dutton.[15] A girl would not guide him to the fine one at Ballygannor until assured that he was a stranger, for, it was explained to him, a woman could refuse nothing to a man at one of these monuments. Some such reason probably lay behind the belief that, if a couple unblessed with children went to a *labba*, the defect in their household was amended. I have been told that this belief existed in Clare, but got no direct evidence of it. The Tuam an goskaigh monument in Ballynahown was believed to be the grave of a giant buried with his great sword, to recover which certain young men dug and overthrew the stones; but they found nothing, and afterwards prospered so ill that they had to emigrate.[16] Grania was supposed to be a male saint near Feakle, and the "scoop" in the west end of Tobergrania dolmen-well at Ballycroum was supposed to be the place where he put in his head to drink.[17] The long grave of Ballykelly, famed for its lovely outlook high over the woods and lake of Doon on the flank of Slieve Bernagh, was known as "Old Grania," but the term "Granny's bed" was not unknown in East Clare. I heard no legend of a "hag" at any dolmen. The alleged rites at the "Druid's Altars" at Maryfort and Carnelly have already been noted.[18] When two blocks of the latter structure were removed for use as gateposts, they returned during the night to their original site, and were never again removed. The hand of the destroyer of a dolmen near Ruan was struck by a splinter and severely injured,[19] the remains of the blocks being left where

[14] Corcomroe legend, given to me by the late Prof. Brian O'Looney.

[15] *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare*, p. 318. On the Continent indecent names and legends are also attached to dolmens; cf. Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, vol. ii., p. 555; vol. iii., p. 845.

[16] Messrs. Hilary and Kelleher of Oughtdarra.

[17] So among the inhabitants in 1896-9.

[18] Vol. xxii., p. 51.

[19] Told to me by the sufferer. His predecessor, who had overthrown some blocks, was also unlucky. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 212.

[p. 257]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

823
778

they lay,—but no vengeance overtook those who levelled many dolmens at Miltown near Tulla.

Basin stones occur not infrequently at or near dolmens, *e.g.* at Kiltanon and Newgrove near Tulla, and at Ballyganner and Cappaghkennedy on the borders of Burren, at the last of which five appear in one slab. In the Life of St. Mochulleus,[20] written in 1141, a basin "like a large *hydria*" was found in a polished block of stone when the saint was levelling the site of his church on Tulla hill. The basins were evidently regarded as very early in date even in the twelfth century. The basin of Doughnambraher (Dabthach nam brathar) at Kyleeane has already been noticed.[21] A large block with two basins is amongst the remains at the place of inauguration of the local kings at Magh Adhair.[22]

Pillar stones and rocks.—Boughils ("petrified boys") and *farbreags* ("petrified men") have been referred to in Section I.[23] A frog-like natural rock, close to the west side of the road from Kilkishen to Fortanne, was blasted and removed after 1887, but I have a sketch of it made in that year. There was a vague saying that it had been made, (and I think I was told also that it was a creature petrified when cursed), by some saint. The Coad stone is said to have been the same height (*com fhod*, "equal height or length," whence Co'ad),[24] as King Teige Acomhad O'Brien about 1460. It, the Cloghlea near Tomgraney, and the "cross" near Kilmoon were evidently boundary marks of church lands. Another legend of Coad

[20] *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xvii.; *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xli., p. 9. The basin was filled with milk by a hind. Similar legends are found in Glendalough (County Wicklow) and elsewhere. Giraldus tells how a hollow stone at Skellig used to be filled with wine for the sacrament.

[773]

[21] Vol. xxii. (Plate IV). The name is Killian on the map, but is pronounced Kyle-e-aan, with a long stress on the last syllable.

[22] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvii., p. 79, vol. xxxiv., pp. 190-1.

[23] Vol. xxi., pp. 183, 186, and the legend of Knocknafearbreaga on p. 185; *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxiv.(c), p. 97, vol. xxvi. (c), p. 471.

[24] *Com-fhod* is also a synonym for a grave.

[P. 258]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

823 778 stone was that the *liagann*[25] was exacted by a father from the slayer of his son, and was the length of the victim. The story of Prince Lachtna (ante 840) tells that an adviser of King Phelim of Cashel tried to arouse his suspicions of Lachtna by an alleged oracle of a pillar stone Liag na neasain, near Killaloe, against "a fair man from Craglea."

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

[25] Dr. G. U. MacNamara. A *liagann* of equal length to the slain son of the Dagda was claimed as an *eric* by the victim's father, "Dind Senchas", *Revue Celtique*, vol. xvi., p. 42.

(*To be continued.*)

[P.259]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*concluded*).

172
823
976

XX. *Earthworks and Buildings.*

Fairy forts and mounds have been dealt with in Section iv., haunted houses in Section viii., and foundation sacrifices in Section xi.

Forts.—The ring walls and mounds in County Clare are probably residential, or, more rarely, sepulchral, but certainly not military. They consist of one or more walls (or banks), usually slightly oval, and the earthworks have fosses and traces of stone facing. They are named *dun*, *lis*, *rath*, and even *caher* (*cathair*), but the last name is usually reserved for the dry stone ring walls. *Ooan* (*uamh*) is used both for forts and for artificial caves in them, and also, for a fort-souterain, in 1317 in the *Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh* (History of the Wars of the O'Briens and de Clares). The country people have no limited views as to the makers of the 2400 forts in Clare. Croaghateeaun near Ballinalacken is attributed to the ancient deities, the Danánn, and one should cross oneself in entering its garth.[1] Mohernagartan and Mohernaglasha were made by the smith god Lon,—the latter for the grey "cloud and rain cow," the Glas. Oisin the poet lived in Caherussheen near Corofin, and the great stone fort on Turlough Hill probably belonged to the "Irish Militia" (Finn's warriors). Chonan, one of Finn's men, dwelt in the now levelled fort on Keentlae (*ceann tsleibh*) on Inchiquin Hill.[2] Three contemporaries, Crochaun (lumped hill), Dahlin, and Sall (the brine), made the forts bearing their names at Loop Head, and one at Cahernaheanmná near them for their sister the beloved of the hero Dermot O'Duine.[3] Oircheannaigh "of the golden cap" made the vast triple Moghane for his "fighting ring."[4] A giant dwelt in the promontory fort of Doonaunmore at Ballinahown who lost his magic staff and was

[1] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 345.

[2] "*Feis tighe chonain.*"

[3] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxviii., p. 351.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. xxiii., p. 281; *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxvii., pp. 218 *et seq.*

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

slain.[5] Another Fhir mór (or huge man) was hunted from Cahermurphy stone fort to Kiltumper, where he was slain and buried.[6] Caherdooneerish was in the tenth century reputed to have been made by Irgus, a Firbolg, at the beginning of our era; it was wrongly attributed by scholars to Fergus, son of Roigh, but the peasantry never abandoned the name of the brother of Aenghus of Dun Aengusa in Aran.

Unlike some old schools of antiquaries, the people did not overlook the later origin of some forts, for they attributed the Grianan and Bealboruma to King Brian Boru (*c.* 1000), the former to defend his horse-paddock (*parc an each*) on the shoulder of Craglea. The fort of Lisnagry, in the heart of the hills near Broadford, was reputed to be the hiding-place of the great king's cattle from the Danes. King Croohoore (Conor) na Siudaine O'Brien (slain 1267) was said to have built Dunconor, the great stone fort in Inishere Aran which MacLiag's poem (*c.* 1000) attributes to Conchraid the Firbolg. The same king, we may note, executed the latest earthworks of a fort recorded in Clare history, at Clonroad, completing the royal *rath* commenced by his father and left unfinished in 1241. Some rebuilding of Dun Conor may quite conceivably have been undertaken in his reign.

To the fairy forts previously mentioned should be added Lissateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna. The people of Tulla had an observance by which the instigator of the destruction of a fort assumed the blame and freed the workman.

Churches.—The church of Clonlea once stood at the opposite side of the lake, near St. Senan's well in Killaneena, whence one night it travelled down the old lane that runs into the lake, passed under the water, and reached its present site. King Conor na Siudaine built Corcomroe Abbey, and, as soon as his five skilled masons had completed the beautiful chancel and chapels, he put them to death lest they should build a rival masterpiece elsewhere. This legend is now being transferred through modern guide-books, the careless compilation of which is a great source of corruption of our legends, to Donald O'Brien, the actual, but not traditional,

[5] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 205.

[P. 261]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

346 773 founder of the building, and is held to explain the rude and inferior work of parts of it. Quin "Abbey" was built by the famous Master Mason Gobbán Saor, who twisted the spiral pillars of its beautiful cloister with his own hands. The builder of the south transept (1433) fell from its gable, and was killed where a tombstone with the scribed figure of an axe marks his grave. The north-west corner of Carran church overhangs, and is destined to fall on the wisest man that shall pass below it.

344 773 *Castles.*—A belief similar to that about Carran church was attached to Ballymulcassel or Mountcashel castle. It is a peel tower, built by King Conor na Srona, about 1460, on a steep little knoll of rock beside the road from Sixmilebridge to Kilkishen. It was to fall on the handsomest person, and gossip told of a very ugly man who always took a longer road to avoid passing it. The same legend and gossip was attached to Newcastle peel tower, near Limerick and not far from the border of Clare. A wizard who lived in Shalee castle was so pestered by his wife that he flew away with half the tower, which remains as Glen castle near Ennistymon station. A guest praised Dysert castle to its owner, 344 O'Dea, and wished that it were full of gold. "I'd rather have it 173 full of O'Hiumhairs," replied O'Dea,[7] the family so complimented being a small but warlike clan, of which one member fought in the wars of 1313-8 and is reported to have slain Richard de Clare at Dysert in 1318. I heard in 1869 that the castles near Doonass were built by seven brothers, and that six came to an untimely end at the hands of the seventh, but the legend seems now forgotten at Clonlara.

346 776 173 *Round Towers.*—The peasants seem never to have adopted the various druidic, Cuthite, phallic, and other theories of 1770 onwards from the so-called "educated classes." To them, as to our earlier writers, the towers are steeples built by saints. John Lloyd, in 1780,[8] calls that of Scattery "the loftiest old Steeple in the Kingdom." Michael O'Brannan, in 1794,[9] tells how St.

[7] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 157. The tale closely resembles a legend of St. Caimin of Iniscaltra and Guaire Aidhne at Iniscaltra, Lough Derg.

[8] *A Short Tour etc.*, p. 21.

[9] Poem on Shannon, *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. ii., pp. 15-8.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Senan "built seven churches and a beautiful high belfry" there, and how "St. Caimin, a vigorous chieftain, erected seven churches and a high belfry" on Lough Derg. Legend told that St. Senan, while building his tower, was interrupted by a woman, and left it unfinished.[10] St. Blawfugh (Blathmac) built two towers at Rathblamac, one of which was stolen and brought to Dysert O'Dea by St. Manawla. Of the bells of Dromcliff and Kilnaboy towers I have already told.[11] Kilnaboy tower was broken down by "the bombardment of Cromwell." The round tower at Tomgraney was faintly remembered, in Petrie's time, as like that on Iniscaltra, but it has long since been forgotten.

Crosses and monuments.—I have already mentioned the cross of Dysert O'Dea,[12] which was unusual in having portions of its carvings on separate pieces of stone, some of which are lost. The cross fell twice, and was re-erected by Conor Crone O'Dea in 1683 and by Col. Synge of Mount Callan in 1872; each benefactor died in the year following his restoration of the cross. The breaking off or fall of any portion of the monument of Sir Donal O'Brien, the first of the baronets of Dromoland, in Kilnasoolagh church, is fatal to his descendants, and so is any attempt to clean or repair it, tradition alleging that one of the O'Briens always dies in either case.[13] My own family believed that, if the family vault were opened, it had soon to be opened twice again to receive new occupants.

Underground passages.—One is said to lead from Cahercrochaun to Dundahlin on Loop Head, and another from the great promontory fort of Dundoillroe eastwards, where a brown track, probably an old road, still remains. A third ran through Barnagoskaigh to the Tuamnagoskaigh in Ballynahown, near Lisdoonvarna, where there is a roofed cleft of some length. A fourth went from Bealboruma fort under the Shannon; through it the angry Brian Boru sent soldiers to waylay and kill his slandered

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 18. The same tale is told of St. Declan and the beautiful perfect round tower of Ardmore, County Waterford.

[11] Vol. xxii., p. 336; *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 144.

[12] Vol. xxii., pp. 57, 456.

[13] The fall of an angel not long before the death of the late Lord Inchiquin greatly strengthened the belief.

[p. 263]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

173 son-in-law the King of Leinster. Others connected Killone with
773 Clare Abbey, and Quin Abbey with St. Finghin's church at the
823 other side of the "Rine."

XXI. *Miscellanea and Addenda.*

173 *Treasure legends and hunting.*—Many forts have been much
556 defaced by persons seeking treasure, though treasure legends are few. Caherscrebeen, near Lemeneagh castle (the Caherscribnib of 1551),[14] is said to be the richest fort in Ireland, having three rooms full respectively "of gold, deer's tallow, and *beor lochlanagh*" or Dane's beer (made by a lost recipe from heather and "the finest of all drinks").[15] Treasure-hunting is, so far as I have learned, in nearly every case in consequence of a dream, especially [737] of a dream repeated more than once. No particular ceremony seems to have been used. The dreamer went, usually by night and sometimes alone or sometimes with a few friends, to the spot indicated, and dug until tired and hope of success was lost. Most of the damage done to stone forts and castles results, in the former from rabbit hunters, and in the latter from people getting material for other buildings. Silver (money) is believed to be buried in the mound of Lismehane castle, and near the curiously scribed rock of Cloch-an-airgid (rock of the silver) near Bohneill castle. I have seen in the field within Dunlicka castle[16] near Kilkee, the holes made by a seeker who was told [172] to dig where he saw a rush growing. "The great Clare gold find" in 1845, near Moghane fort, enriched archaeology rather than folklore. But the finders in some cases believed it to be fairy gold, and the people of Newmarket-on-Fergus tell that those who got it, with one exception, did not profit by it; the one lucky exception did not find his prosperity permanent. The only interesting treasure tale I have found is that of the townland of Skaghvickencrow (MacEnchroe's hawthorn), told by Dr. G. U.

[14] In the will of the last recognised King of Thomond, Murrogh, Earl of Thomond.

[15] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvi., p. 368.

[16] See also vol. xxi., p. 344. [p. 264]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

MacNamara.[17] A certain Flann MacDonnchaidh, a very poor man, lived near the bush long ago, and dreamt "again and again" that, if he went to the Bald Bridge, Droichiod maol-na-Luimneaigh (Ball's Bridge in Limerick City), he would find money and make his fortune. He went there and walked up and down until he was worn out. He was on the point of going away when a cobbler asked him what he was about, and he told his story. The cobbler laughed, and told how he himself had dreamed of finding treasure under a bush at a place called Skaghvickencrow, but had wasted no time in looking for it.[18] MacDonnchaidh returned home, dug, and found a flag with an inscription in an unknown tongue. He left the stone on his hearth, and, as no local scholar could read it, he troubled no more about the matter. Years went by, and one night a wandering schoolmaster asked for hospitality, and of course got it. The "angel unawares" translated the inscription as "one side is more lucky than the other." Next day, when his guest was gone, MacDonnchaidh dug, and found so much money as to make rich men of himself and his descendants.[19]

The only tale of church treasure I have met with is that the silver bells of either Killeany or Kilmoon church lie hidden in the brook between their ruins called from the legend Owenacluggan.

Funerals and graveyards.—Though I have frequently attended funerals of persons of all classes and denominations in many parts of Clare, I have very little to tell of the ceremonies. Sometimes I have seen spades crossed on a grave, and long ago saw three crosses, made of twigs from a hawthorn tree in a graveyard, placed on a coffin. The body is usually carried feet foremost round the graveyard sunwise, and sometimes, but rarely, three times. The horrible habit of digging out all the contents of the grave is usual; the older coffin planks are thrown away, and the human remains

[17] *The Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, Part 4, p. 42.

[18] Cf. the well-known story of the Swaffham tinker and London Bridge.

[19] I heard this tale, perhaps in 1870, from John O'Halloran at Edenvale near Ennis, about the Crowes. Certainly that family (MacEnchroe's) has a hawthorn bush in its armorial bearings, and the motto "Skagh M'Enchroe." Dr. MacNamara conjectures that Flann's surname was really MacEnchroe.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

764 placed on the new coffin. Where burials take place at short intervals the results are best left untold, but such cases are rare. A consequence of this fearful overcrowding is that no old graveyard is free from coffin planks and plates, bones, and fragmentary or whole skulls.[30] Those who saw Quin "Abbey" before 1879 will remember the enormous heap of skulls, (even then, however, much diminished), heaped round a tree near the graveyard gate. At Tomfinlough the bones and skulls were neatly stacked in a recess, at Kilmacreehy they were heaped on a sort of side altar in the chancel, and in other churches (Coad etc.) I have seen single skulls staring out of holes in the wall.

765 Places for the burial of strangers and unbaptized children are common, and are usually *killeens*, old forgotten church sites, sometimes in a fort, sometimes at a well, or unenclosed in a field.[31] Those at Kilquane, near Ennis; Fomerla, near Tulla; Kyleeáne, near Barefield (with Doughnambraher stone); and Kilvoydane, near Spansil Hill, have basin stones. Some *killeens*, such as that between the forts of Mortyclogh, near Corcomroe Abbey, and that at Fortanne, have crept back into favour for adult burial, but several ancient churches at which bones are found have not been so used in traditional memory (*e.g.* Toomullin, Crumlin, Killonaghan, and Kilbract, round Lisdoonvarna; Templeline, in Carran; Temple-an-aird, near Carrigaholt; St. Senan's, on Mutton Island; Temple aed O'Connell, near Ruan; and several churches on Scattery and Iniscaltra). The church of Kilcashen was not remembered to have been a burial place before Eugene O'Curry's grandfather, Melachein O'Curry, in a pestilence about 1760, charitably collected the deserted unburied corpses "on carts and sledges," and buried them at the ruin on his farm.[32] Bodies were similarly buried during the Great Famine at the Lisheen, near Lough Fergus. Oughtdarra, near Lisdoonvarna, has the remains of a church of St. Sinnach MacDara,[33] where children under seven

[731]

[776]

[30] See also vol. xxii., p. 56.

[31] For a list, with notes, see *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. vi., ser. iii., p. 129.

[32] Kilcashen, *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 369.

[33] A saint famous all round Galway Bay, but not found in the ancient Calendars. Some suppose him to be a Fox Hero, *i.e.* Sinnach mac Dara, Fox

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

years of age are buried; after that age bodies are taken to the parish graveyard at Killilagh. In Shanakill, on the Shannon bank opposite Scattery, it was believed that the dead were moved supernaturally under the river into the Sacred Isle.[24]

I know of a case in eastern Clare where parents, having lost several of their children, tried to break the deadly record by changing their burial place, but, alas! without success.

I am not aware of any belief in Clare that the spirit of the last-comer in a graveyard has to watch the place or to bring water to the souls in Purgatory. There was, however, recently a race between two funerals to Rathblamac graveyard, which may imply some such belief. The custom of burying a stone from a church or an ancient tombstone in a new grave, (which has led to the disappearance of several early monuments at Clonmacnoise), prevails at Tomgraney, two ancient tombstones having recently been recovered on digging new graves. As we have already seen,[25] St. Mochulla's well avenged the encroachment of its landlord on the *killeen* beside it, but the graveyards of Kildimo, near Kilkee, and St. Catherine's at Kells, near Corofin, are under cultivation. Dr. MacNamara noted a curious allusion to the last-named in O'Daly's fierce satire on "The Tribes of Ireland" in 1610. The people of Kells are there reproached for "digging the churchyard in the snow." The oldest Irish Law Code, the *Seanchus Mór*, has a clause against digging in a churchyard or breaking bones there. Kildimo was levelled, and its site included in an orchard by 1816.[26] Interference with human remains is deeply and dangerously resented, yet spells are sometimes worked with them.[27] The stealing of a dead man's hand for a butter charm is said to have taken place near Kilkee,[28] and the bones of a Franciscan with the brown cloth of his gown still adhering, found during the repairs at Ennis Abbey, were nearly all taken, but probably from most reverential motives.

766 [775] 764 [775] [765] 789 [776]

son of oak tree. There is a Knockaunatinnagh (little hill of the foxes) beside his church.

[24] *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii. (1841), p. 545.

[25] Vol. xxii., p. 211.

[26] W. G. Mason, *A Statistical Account etc.*, vol. ii., p. 434.

[27] See *Burial and Skull Beliefs*, vol. xxii., pp. 55-6, 456.

[28] Vol. xxii., p. 340.

[P. 267]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

789
625 *Charms.*[39]—The charming of rats, which was described by Eugene O'Curry to Dr. J. Henthorne Todd, seems to have been forgotten in the Doonaha district, where, at least, I never heard of it during several visits in the neighbourhood from 1896. The performance is ancient, being described after A.D. 600 by the famous bard Seanchan Torpeist, a contemporary of King Guaire Aidhne of Gort, who ruled the district adjoining Clare on the north from about A.D. 610. O'Curry's story is that a certain John O'Mulconry joined the Established Church, and was ordained, being eventually advanced to be curate of Kilrush and Kilfieragh in the south-west corner of Clare. Now Kilfieragh graveyard was so horribly infested by rats that serious accidents occurred at every burial (I presume from their attacks), and every corpse buried there was entirely devoured by the following morning. The curate, horrified by the scenes he witnessed at a burial, proceeded to charm the rats, as the country folk firmly believed him able to do from his knowledge of old Irish literature. A certain John Foley, of Querin on the Shannon, saw that evening what looked like a bank of low-lying fog crossing a bog between him and Kilfieragh. He fancied it was the fairy host, and ran to one side, when he saw it was a compact body of rats. They went through his cornfield, without stopping, to Querin point, then burrowing into the dry sand and disappearing. They soon proved as destructive as ever, gnawing the fishermen's nets and boats (probably leather *curraghs*). The sufferers gathered a great number of neighbours, amongst whom was Owen Mór O'Curry, the writer's father, and proceeded to dig out and kill the vermin. An incredible number were slain, but the survivors seemed innumerable, and in the end, with the courage of despair, attacked the slayers, trying to run up their clothes and bite them. Wearied and terrified at the swarms, the peasantry at last gave up the fight and fled. Eugene O'Curry never heard what became of the remnant of the rats.

Thomas O'Keane, a land surveyor, told O'Curry in 1820 that he knew and used an ancient satirical poem to expel rats, and that he had successfully driven out all that infested his house and mill at Bealahagas, near Dunlicka Castle. The charm was in archaic and enigmatical Irish. Fired by emulation, young O'Curry

[39] Addenda to Section xi., vol. xxii., pp. 49-60.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

wrote a satire against the rats, and tried it on an infested house at Kilkee, in the same year, but without success.

About the same time certain men in Limerick City were famous for being able to free ships in that port from rats. Their method was to fix a razor, edge upwards, on the ship, and by their charms to force the rats to cut their throats on it.[30]

Dr. G. U. MacNamara tells me that Denis Curtis near Corofin cures liver complaints, bleeding, and cows that have swallowed raw potatoes. He puts his human patients on their backs on his anvil, and pretends to strike them with a sledge hammer. This is done on three occasions, on two Mondays and a Thursday. The patients then drink forge water. All the family have the gift of healing, but only one exercises it. The family legend says that St. Patrick's horse lost a shoe near Kilnaboy, and their ancestor shod it gratuitously. The saint therefore endowed the family with the power, and people even return from America to be cured by the smith.

Marriage tabu.—In eastern Clare, a newly-married woman attended Mass on the Sunday next after her marriage, and was severely criticised for doing so. Local opinion held that she and her husband ought not to attend public worship until the second Sunday after the marriage.[31]

Púcas.[32]—A recent apparition of the *púca* of Clonlara was described to me in 1911 as a dark, shadowy horse near the bridge over the Blackwater, about two miles to the south-west of the village. My nephew, Dr. Hugh Gerald Westropp, heard of similar appearances about 1888.

Lucky and unlucky deeds.[33]—The *geasa* and *buadha*, or tabus and lucky acts, relating to the present County Clare are described in the *Leabhar na g Ceart* (Book of Rights),[34] in a poem by Cuan na

[30] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. v., ser. iii., p. 362.

[31] I learn from a Petty Sessions case, March, 1911, at Derrygonnelly, that this custom prevails also in Fermanagh, and that friends and relatives do not visit the young couple in the interim, but entertain them on the second Sunday.

[32] Addendum to vol. xxi., p. 481.

[33] Addendum to section xii., *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds*, vol. xxii., pp. 203-4.

[34] Edited by John O'Donovan, 1847, pp. 16-21.

789
825
757
585
796
626
776
777
[574]
[P. 269]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Leochain, who was slain in 1024. The King of Cashel (over-king, therefore, of North Munster) was forbidden to pass a night at Latteragh in northern Tipperary at the beginning of harvest; to encamp for nine consecutive nights at the river Suir; to hold a border meeting at Gowran; and to listen to the groans of women (in a raid) in southern Tipperary. The King of Connacht was not to go in a speckled cloak,—the prose adds "on a piebald horse,"—to the heath of Luchaid in Clare. On the other hand, the ruler of Cashel brought good luck by plundering cattle in Connacht while the cuckoo sings; burning north Leinster; passing over Sliabh Cua,—"on a Tuesday," says the prose,—to pacify south Munster; crossing Magh Ailbhe with a light grey host; and resting six weeks (of Lent) every year at Cashel. It was most unlucky for him to wait for a feast at Killarney Lake for a full week from a Monday. At the present day some families still have their own tabus, lucky and lucky deeds and days, dreams, and omens, which sometimes even run counter to beliefs generally received,—*e.g.* that the Friday falling on the thirteenth of any month, or to dream of a wild cat or other wild animal, is lucky.

Witch hare.[35]—Anthony Bruodin (*Bruodinus* or *Prodinus*), a Franciscan of Quin Abbey, tells in *Corolla Oecodemicæ Minoriticæ* (Prague, 1664, p. 73) how his uncle (*patruus*), Florence of Moynaeo (Moynoe on Lough Derg) went out at the dawn of the first of May with his eldest son Bonaventura, (who died in Spain in 1643), and with their hounds to hunt hares. At last the servants saw one sucking a cow. The hounds chased it, biting it as it escaped, into a cottage, where an old woman was found torn behind.

Glasgevnagh cow.[36]—Vague legends are told of her living at Treanahow, Shallee, and Ballygannon.

Ghosts or fairy men.—Mary (Mescal) Doyle, of Newmarket-on-Fergus, tells how she saw two ghostly men in black walking on a road near that village.

Stolen bride.—A legend of a stolen bride at Querin on the Shannon is told in Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends etc. of Ireland* (1887), vol. i., p. 49.

[35] Addendum to vol. xxii. p. 449. [p.270]
[36] Addendum to p. 89 *supra*.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

In concluding this survey of the traditional beliefs (other than folk-tales) of County Clare, I am quite prepared to learn that I have failed to secure much that is well known to residents in the county. Even my mistakes and omissions, if they lead the people of Clare to abandon their apathy and to correct and supply the deficiencies of my notes, will have helped on the cause of Irish folklore study, and much that is on the point of being forgotten may be rescued for scientific workers on that most important and fascinating subject.[87] 114

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

[87] *Additional Erratum*, vol. xii., p. 54. *For* Terry Island *read* Torry Island.